TO: New Mexico Public Education Department
FROM: Learning Policy Institute
RE: New Mexico Teacher Evaluation Outreach Themes
DATE: July 31, 2019

Between Tuesday, May 28, and Friday, June 21, 2019, the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) held 13 stakeholder community input sessions across the state as part of efforts to re-envision the educator effectiveness system. These sessions were open to teachers, administrators, human resource teams, families, and community members to provide input on what components should be included in the new teacher evaluation system, the evaluation process, and how the new system should be used to improve teaching and learning outcomes. (See outreach schedule here.)

This memo presents several takeaways from these sessions: key themes across discussions, areas of concern, and possibilities for improvement. It was drawn from the session notes and posters collected by the CORE team from New Mexico State University, follow-up interviews with the CORE team and members of the PED who attended all or most of the sessions, and the observation notes compiled by members of the Learning Policy Institute team from the sessions each attended.

The dominant theme of these meetings is that New Mexico's education stakeholders want a teacher evaluation system that prioritizes teacher professionalism and growth—not punishing and embarrassing teachers. Teachers are ready to move to a system that values the full scope of work they do every day in the classroom, encourages them to take risks to improve student learning, recognizes their strengths and achievements, and gives them opportunities to improve their practice and collaborate with their peers and administrators. Administrators agree with this vision for teacher evaluation that helps them better understand the strengths of their teachers and how they can support teachers' development, but they need a more streamlined, easy-to-use system that allows them to spend more time in classrooms and building positive relationships with teachers and less time sitting in front of a computer, uploading reports. Community members and advocates also want a system that respects teachers and keeps them in the classroom, values their efforts to connect to their communities, and is clear and reasonable.

There is also broad understanding from all stakeholder groups that the transition to this new system will not be easy, but they see the benefits—a more authentic process, stronger relationships, and putting the focus back on cultivating good teacher practice to improve student learning—as far outweighing the challenges that come with change. However, it will be critical that the Task Force take the following into consideration during the transition to the new system:

1. The Task Force should acknowledge the lingering tension and distrust between teachers and administrators and the PED and make restoring trust an integral part of the process. The stakeholder engagement meetings were a good start to rebuilding trust, but the Task Force and the PED should understand that this will be an ongoing process and find ways to include teacher, administrator, and community member voice over the course of the Task Force's work and into implementation of the new system.

2. The Task Force might consider how to be as transparent as possible throughout this process. All decisions must be communicated in a timely, effective, and open manner that allows stakeholders to fully understand how decisions were reached, and where decisions are made that diverge from stakeholder opinion, the reasoning behind them should be fully publicized. This will go a long way toward ensuring that trust is built and maintained throughout the process, which is something many teachers felt was lacking in recent years.

3. The transition to the new system will require training for administrators and teachers on all aspects of the new system, but both groups said the most important piece will be training on the new components of the observation rubric and the process for implementing the system effectively. Trainings that bring together administrators and teachers can help build a level of trust and put both groups on the same page in terms of what is expected in the new observation process as well as what defines excellent teaching.

4. Beyond training for teachers and administrators, the transition between the old teacher evaluation system and the new one will require a mindset shift about the purpose of teacher evaluation. The PED might consider how to create an explicit and ongoing dialogue on how moving from a punitive system to a growth system creates an entirely new paradigm for what is valued and important in schools. In addition to redesigning the teacher evaluation system, the Task Force and the PED will likely want to create a communications strategy that helps all stakeholders understand this shift and clear messaging from the PED that they are fully committed to this change and supporting educators and school staff during the transition.

5. There remains a gap in teacher and administrator knowledge about what is state-controlled in the evaluation system and what is up to local determination. The Task Force and, ultimately, the PED will need to explicitly explain where state parameters are in place and how local flexibility is enabled on various components of the evaluation system. The Task Force will also need to acknowledge the tension between wanting a level of local flexibility in the evaluation process while maintaining the need for consistency in implementation and determining progression levels across the state.

6. It will be useful for the PED and its Task Force to remind stakeholders to maintain realistic expectations of the time and capacity-building needed for successful changes and understand that change will not happen overnight. Teachers and administrators are already asked to do so much, and to gain buy-in, a plan must be made to systematize the new teacher evaluation process in a way that does not feel like "one more thing."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Below we have grouped stakeholder comments regarding a re-envisioned teacher evaluation system by five major takeaways about what stakeholders hope for:

Key Takeaway 1: Designing a Fair and Objective Evaluation System That Encourages Growth, Support, and Collaboration—Not Punishment

The top priority of all stakeholders at every meeting across the state is to create a teacher evaluation system that prioritizes teacher growth, development, and professionalism and

contributes toward an environment of collaboration and support. Teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders want a system that acknowledges the full range of what teachers do every day in their classrooms as well as to create a positive learning environment across the school. Additionally, they want a system that serves as a meaningful and authentic tool to recognize teacher strengths, identify areas of needed support, and create professional development plans aligned with teacher and school needs.

Key Takeaway 2: Embracing Actionable and Meaningful Measures of Effective Teacher Practice and Professionalism

To create this positive, growth-focused teacher evaluation system, stakeholders agree consideration must be given to all of the following elements:

- alignment of evaluations to professional development and support
- clear and specific observation rubrics focused on important dimensions of in-classroom practice
- multiple, ongoing observations to document growth and provide useful, timely feedback
- opportunities for teacher self-reflection
- inclusion of formative teacher data (e.g., lesson or unit plans, professional development, artifacts of student work)
- student and parent surveys used for improving individual practice and school climate; and
- using teacher attendance as an incentive, not for punishment.

Key Takeaway 3: Assessing Teachers' Contributions to Student Learning Should Rely on Multiple Measures, Not a Single Test or Value-Added Score

Stakeholders also believe that a teacher evaluation system built for growth and support must include:

- valid student assessment data that provides a measure of student learning growth over a single year and allows teachers to document their students' learning and
- authentic evidence of student learning.

Key Takeaway 4: Differentiating Evaluation by Teacher Role and Experience

Stakeholders feel that a teacher evaluation system useful for teachers' individual and collective growth should be differentiated in the following ways:

- by level of experience,
- by students served, and
- by content area.

Additionally, stakeholders articulate an interest in having local flexibility within the new teacher evaluation system in order to determine and support local teaching priorities.

Key Takeaway 5: Building a Fair and Well-Supported System

In addition to the above elements, stakeholders feel that several additional elements would be necessary for the creation and implementation of an effective, growth-oriented teacher evaluation system. These include:

- widely available training to support transition to the new system
- a manageable and user-friendly evaluation process
- access to resources and exemplars that demonstrate levels of teaching defined in rubrics, and
- a fair appeals process to address disagreements and/or unreflective observations.

Within this analysis, we have included an overview for each takeaway that further explains stakeholders' views on the theme, as well as stakeholder quotes to highlight specific, illustrative points of feedback. We attribute quotes to whole groups, rather than individuals, because the comments represent consensus viewpoints collaboratively developed in role-alike groups and shared during the group share-out portion of stakeholder meetings.

Key Takeaway 1: Designing a Fair and Objective Evaluation System That Encourages Growth, Support, and Collaboration—Not Punishment

"Get rid of teacher evaluation that pushes teachers out of the profession."
- *District Administrators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"Celebrate what teachers are good at—[we] need to know where our strengths are and maximize them, as well as find the areas where growth is needed."
- *Secondary Educators, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

There is overwhelming agreement among all groups of stakeholders and in all regions of the state that a new teacher evaluation system should be focused on helping teachers to grow and improve their practice—not on punishing teachers or pushing teachers out of the profession. Teachers, administrators, and community members agree that the old system focused far too much on criticizing teachers without any opportunities for improvement or direct pathways to support.

Teachers are highly receptive to an evaluation system that offers continuous, constructive feedback and coaching; helps them to understand their strengths and areas for growth; and provides pathways to leadership roles in their school. Similarly, administrators seek a system that presents a more authentic process that captures effective teaching and helps them understand how to better retain and support teachers. Teachers specifically asked for an evaluation system that celebrates and maximizes their strengths, recognizes their growth, and encourages them to take chances to improve their students' learning.

One specific request to reduce the stigma from the former system is to replace existing rubric levels (currently designated as Ineffective, Minimally Effective, Effective, Highly Effective, and Exemplary) to another set of indicators showing progression (e.g., numbered levels 1–4 or descriptors such as "novice" through "expert"). Stakeholders noted that educators often associate the 5-tier rating system with an A–F system. From this perspective, an "Effective" rating corresponds with a C:

"Teachers use a 5-point scale to measure themselves and compare 'Effective' to a C. To avoid this, consider using a 4-point system."
- *District Administrators, Deming Stakeholder Meeting*

Other stakeholders recommended using a dashboard instead of a summative report to emphasize support and growth and give teachers and administrators a clear picture of all of the elements of the evaluation and the ability to easily pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are also strongly in favor of replacing the current static evaluation with a "living document" that they can add to throughout the year, use to monitor their progress toward their goals, and build on from year to year.

"Administrators should have an authentic understanding of the professionals in their building and their teachers' strengths and areas for growth."
- *Elementary Educators, Las Cruces Stakeholder Meeting*

"What is the outcome? What can you do to help me grow?"
- *Secondary Educators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"Evaluation should be an opportunity to support growth and recognize teacher achievement."
- *Secondary Educators, Clovis Stakeholder Meeting*

There is also overwhelming agreement on the need for transparency and objectivity in the new teacher evaluation system to ensure that all stakeholders have complete clarity on what teachers are being evaluated on and to reduce the impact of bias on evaluations. There is concern among teachers that having a strained relationship with their administrator may skew scores negatively on their evaluation, particularly during observations, and that there should be measures in place, including bringing neutral observers into the process and triangulating observation outcomes and other determined input data, to combat any bias that may occur. Additionally, there are calls from all groups of stakeholders to ensure the components and expectations included in the evaluation system are clear to everyone, especially teachers, so that there are no surprises during the process and, ultimately, when teachers receive their final evaluation results.

"[We want] clear communication about elements of teacher evaluation.… What is expected?"
- *Elementary Educators, Santa Fe Stakeholder Meeting*

Both teachers and administrators are also eager to have an evaluation system that promotes greater levels of collaboration between teachers, between teachers and administrators, and between schools and the community. Teachers and administrators expressed frustration with the current system, which is perceived as fostering a competitive and divisive environment, and they, along with community members, want a system that encourages more positive teacher–administrator relationships, greater levels of cooperation between teachers, and increased opportunities for all adults in and outside of the school to work together to improve teaching and learning for all students. Teachers are particularly keen on having opportunities to conduct learning observations in other teachers' classrooms to gain new skills and learn new teaching methods, as well as more time to work in vertical and horizontal teams.

"[We want] collaboration instead of competition among teachers."
- *Elementary Educators, Albuquerque Stakeholder Meeting*

"[Evaluations should] promote collaboration … collaboration between teachers, between teachers and administrators, between teachers and instructional coaches."
- *Administrators, Las Vegas Stakeholder Meeting*

"[We] think that teachers should be able to support each other and be able to help coach each other."
- *Community Members, Hobbs Stakeholder Meeting*

Key Takeaway 2: Embracing Actionable and Meaningful Measures of Effective Teacher Practice and Professionalism

In designing a new teacher evaluation system, stakeholders offered several suggestions on the Danielson Framework and measures of teacher practice and professionalism—observations, self-reflections, artifacts, surveys, and attendance—that they believed would be fair, objective, and focused on supporting teachers' growth and development. Among the areas of greatest stakeholder consensus are the need to use observations to document growth and provide useful, timely feedback; allow for multiple perspectives in observations, including peers, external observers, and students; make space for teacher self-reflection in observations; include artifacts that are representative of authentic teacher classroom practice; and find more appropriate ways to use student and parent surveys and teacher attendance in the evaluation system.

Alignment of Evaluations to Professional Development and Support

Above all, stakeholders collectively agree that all components of teacher evaluations, from observations to surveys to evidence of student learning and effective teacher practice, should be aligned with professional development and support. Many are supportive of enhancing and using professional development plans (PDPs) to help teachers identify their growth goals and

measuring progress toward these goals in evaluations. Administrators and teachers envision a system that succinctly ties areas identified for growth, especially for novice teachers, to a plan of action for support and improvement. Most feel that the current system does not help administrators understand the needs of their teachers, which leads to a lack of support for teachers and unfocused, inconsistent schoolwide professional development that does little to advance teacher development or school improvement goals. Teachers are also frustrated by what they see as stand-alone observations and overall evaluations that are disconnected from their professional development plans.

"Evaluation should be followed by effective professional development based on teacher need as evidenced by evaluation."
- *Board Member, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

"[We want evaluation] that is content/program specific … [and] want to avoid district-mandated professional development and have professional development that is working on individual professional development that is specific to the needs of teachers."
- *Secondary Educators, Las Cruces Stakeholder Meeting*

Clear and Specific Observation Rubrics

"Streamline domain indicators to minimize and avoid redundancy."
- *Elementary Educators, Las Cruces Stakeholder Meeting*

There is little pushback to the Danielson Framework from teachers and administrators, especially on Domains 2: Planning and Preparation and 3: Teaching for Learning), but they do see room for streamlining some of its content and improving how it is used in observations. One suggestion with widespread support is to remove the "Exemplary" category from the observation rubric because it is often looking for teacher practice that happens outside of the classroom. For example, under the current NM TEACH observation rubric, to earn an "Exemplary" rating in Domain 1D requires the teacher showing that he or she "actively engages colleagues and provides resources to them in areas that are pertinent to their needs" and "provides and trains staff for school-wide initiatives." Most teachers agree that this part of their work is important, but they feel that it should live outside of the classroom observation rubric.

Similarly, teachers understand the importance of Domain 4: Professionalism, which measures teachers on communicating with families, participating in a professional community, keeping accurate records, reflecting on practice, and displaying professionalism, but they feel that including this in the observation rubric complicates the observation process. Instead, they suggest that these measures be included elsewhere in the evaluation, potentially as items that help building administrators consider teacher leadership roles, and they should be worked on in consultation with administrators.

As one educator group from the Española stakeholder meeting put it: "Areas to be observed should be observable in the classroom."

"Domains need to be modified and simplified."
- *Building Administrators, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

Multiple, Ongoing Observations to Document Growth and Provide Useful, Timely Feedback

"[We want an] observation model that is continuous, authentic, and simple."
- *Building Administrators, Clovis Stakeholder Meeting*

Improving observations and making the process more authentic is a primary area of concern for stakeholders, and particularly for teachers and building administrators, who want formal and informal observations and walk-throughs to happen on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. Almost all agreed that multiple observations and walk-throughs across the course of the school year would help administrators gain a more authentic picture of what teachers are doing in the classroom, instead of a one-time snapshot, as well as allow both teachers and administrators the opportunity to document growth over time.

"Administrator observations are important…[and should include] clear rubrics, multiple observations, timely feedback with clear path to improvement."
- *Elementary Educators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"Observations … need to allow for a view of the teacher over time and not merely a moment in time."
- *Elementary Educators, Albuquerque Stakeholder Meeting*

Teachers and administrators are also strongly in favor of having several observations and walk-throughs or visits throughout the school year because they see a strong need for immediate feedback and creating on ongoing dialogue around specific strengths and areas for growth. Many teachers expressed frustration over receiving feedback from observations well after they were conducted and from the evaluation as a whole at the end of the school year and being unable to act on it until the next school year. Teachers are also highly in favor of having more points of contact with their building administrators before formal observations take place (e.g., two or three informal walk-throughs and conversations) to build a positive working relationship and discuss classroom context and specific identified areas for growth that can focus the formal observation.

"We would like multiple walk-throughs throughout the year, and we want feedback from each of these visits."
- *Secondary Educators, Hobbs Stakeholder Meeting*

"We want timely feedback on our walk-throughs and observations. Please give us feedback that is timely, not just at the end of the year."
- *Elementary Educators, Hobbs Stakeholder Meeting*

"Feedback and reflection should be a collaborative dialogue between administrators and teachers instead of just a rubric."

> - *Administrators, Las Cruces Stakeholder Meeting*

To make the process more manageable, suggestions were raised in several stakeholder meetings to streamline observations by only conducting evaluations for state accountability purposes for consistently high-performing teachers every three years. Additionally, those evaluations would focus on just one agreed-upon domain or specific strands within a domain, based on areas for growth mutually identified by teachers and administrators in professional development plans. Some suggested that training highly rated, experienced teachers to become observers would also help lift the burden on administrators, and that these trained teachers could conduct observations, assist with coaching, and establish a peer observation and/or coaching system with other consistently high-performing teachers during non-high-stakes evaluation years.

There is also interest in involving the perspectives of external observers and students in the observation process. Some teachers also recommended bringing in content-specific observers who can better understand their teaching methods or having neutral, external observers brought in to conduct unbiased observations, though there is concern that these outside observers could lack the critical context of the school and/or classroom. Some teachers also discussed building in formal or informal conversations with students during observations to help administrators understand whether their experience during the observation is in sync with what students experience on a daily basis or whether it is just a "dog and pony show."

Opportunities for Teacher Self-Reflection

Several groups of teachers recommended having the opportunity to record observations to provide another level of objectivity and support self-reflection. Teachers feel that being able to record their classroom during observations and use the video during the post-observation meeting to walk through the lesson together with their observer could serve as a powerful learning tool and an opportunity to drive a shared sense of ownership over the observation. Videotaping observations or other lessons teachers want to learn from could also provide a chance for teachers to self-reflect and evaluate themselves, and the resulting self-reflection could even be the catalyst for observation debriefs, peer learning and collaboration, and professional development around building meaningful self-reflection practice.

Inclusion of Other Formative Teacher Data (e.g., Lesson Plans, Professional Development, Classroom Artifacts, Examples of Assignments or Student Work)

"Please include lesson planning and professional development in our evaluation. We spend time on these things and we want credit for these things."

> - *Elementary Educators, Hobbs Stakeholder Meeting*

Stakeholders also discussed the inclusion of other teacher data in the evaluation system, because, as referenced in the quote above, teachers want the ability to showcase items such as lesson plans, artifacts of teaching practice and evidence of student learning, and evidence of professional development and growth aligned with their professional development plans and needs of their school. Likewise, administrators spoke of a need for multiple measures of effective teaching practice outside of observations and student learning outcomes. Teachers do ask that the new system reduces the amount of time it takes to upload these other pieces of evidence into the online evaluation portal.

"From a building administrator standpoint, we should be able to have many measures that show how a teacher is doing."
- *Building Administrators, Hobbs Stakeholder Meeting*

Student and Parent Surveys Used in Helpful Ways

"Parent/student data is very important [but] the data should not be used as punitive."
- *Community Members, Albuquerque Stakeholder Meeting*

The prevailing notion on the current iterations of the student and parent surveys is that they should not be used for accountability purposes because these surveys became less valid and reliable when there are high stakes attached. Chief among the concerns is that many teachers feel there are too many opportunities for bias in the current surveys, and they are concerned that parents and students who may not like the teacher or who hold a grudge may take this out on them in the survey. Many teachers also expressed frustration that the parent survey can be taken multiple times, which allows for negative opinions from just a few parents to dominate their survey data.

Despite these concerns, many stakeholders suggested that student and parent surveys, with more useful questions and a greater focus on the schoolwide learning environment, could be used by individual teachers for improvement of teaching practice and for both teachers and administrators to gain a better understanding of the broader school climate. One teacher at an Albuquerque stakeholder meeting discussed a personally developed student survey she uses in her classroom as the best thing she has ever done in her career because it gives her the feedback she needs to adjust her practice and helps her better understand her students' needs. Other stakeholders responded positively to the use of a student survey in this manner and the ability to personalize the survey to their own classrooms, and there was some discussion around using personalized student surveys like this as a means to show teacher reflection and willingness to grow within an evaluation system. Developing a set of collective or common questions for a student survey that teachers could draw from could also create an opportunity for shared learning among teachers around most effective practices for students.

Using Teacher Attendance as an Incentive, Not for Punishment

Teachers are strongly against the use of attendance data in the evaluation system because they believe it judges them on something they may not always be able to control. For example, teachers feel it is unfair to hold someone accountable for absences when unexpected health issues occur. On the other hand, building and district administrators both see a measure of attendance as important because, as one said, "Students are getting the best when teachers are in the classroom." Both groups did agree, however, that attendance could be used as an additional measure to provide teachers with high attendance "bonus points" on their overall evaluation score. There was also a small number of stakeholders who felt attendance should fall under local control, with district administrators being able to set their own threshold for teacher absences.

Key Takeaway 3: Assessing Teachers' Contributions to Student Learning Should Rely on Multiple Measures, Not a Single Test or Value-Added Score

The primary point of agreement on using student achievement data in the teacher evaluation system is that student growth should be included, but the current use of the value-add model (VAM) that compares student learning growth from year to year is unfair and unhelpful. Most stakeholders agree that regardless of the assessment chosen, it needs to happen more than once a year so that teachers are able to document the learning growth of their students across the course of the school year on what they are expected to teach and what skills and competencies their students are expected to develop. Many teachers and administrators think that at the very least, assessments should be given at the beginning of the year (e.g., a pre-test) and end of the year, but many felt that assessments that provide more immediate feedback were far more preferable.

Though there was a lot of conversation at the stakeholder meetings about a statewide student assessment, many expressed a need for having some level of local control or input on assessments while balancing the need for statewide consistency. Many feel that the use of in-classroom pre- and post-tests as an artifact of student learning growth should be considered, particularly since they offer a more immediate opportunity for teachers to understand how students are progressing in their class. There are also significant concerns about using student data on English language arts and math assessments for all teachers, particularly for electives teachers, who believe they should be measured on student outcomes that are more closely aligned with their course objectives.

"Include areas of student achievement ... student growth over time, not just three data points or just one year's growth."
-   *Elementary Educators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"We want the opportunity to show growth, not proficiency."
-   *Elementary Educators, Hobbs Stakeholder Meeting*

"[We think] baselines for growth, with students' pre- and post-test, makes sense within a year."
District Administrators, Gallup Stakeholder Meeting

"[We want] content-specific, content-related data."

- *Secondary Educators, Clovis Stakeholder Meeting*

There is widespread agreement among teachers that there needs to be a significant place in the new evaluation system to document student learning in ways other than standardized test scores. Some stakeholders discussed the use of authentic evidence of student learning in the evaluation system and allowing teachers to produce evidence and artifacts of student growth. Many teachers suggested that there should be some way of including student progress toward achieving IEPs for special education teachers. Some teachers felt that portfolios of student work should be included.

"[There should be] opportunities to demonstrate student growth through documentation, not state testing."

- *Elementary Educators, Clovis Stakeholder Meeting*

"Student achievement should be valued, but it cannot be a single snapshot of one test to determine teacher effectiveness."

- *Secondary Educators, Clovis Stakeholder Meeting*

Many stakeholder groups are also eager to determine a way to document students' social and emotional growth and development and include it in the evaluation, though they do not advocate for testing on these skills. Some suggested this could be included in teacher's PDP goals (e.g., a teacher may choose to evaluate themselves on how they contribute to students' social and emotional growth or how they include students' social and emotional development within their teaching practice). Many stakeholders also believe the new teacher evaluation system should reflect the cultural diversity of students and be inclusive of teachers' efforts to make their classrooms culturally relevant.

"[We think the] social-emotional needs of students [should be] recognized."

- *Community/Business Stakeholders, Española Stakeholder Meeting*

Key Takeaway 4: Differentiating Evaluations by Teacher Role and Experience

"One evaluation system does not fit all populations and communities."

- *Administrators, Española Stakeholder Meeting*

"Differentiate evaluation for teachers like we expect teachers to do for students."

- *District Administrators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

Educators across the state repeatedly stated that there should be some level of differentiation of evaluation for teachers. Stakeholders felt that an overly rigid, unadaptable evaluation system leads to some criteria that are irrelevant, unattainable, or unproductive to an individual teacher's practice. Frequent dimensions of differentiation noted by stakeholders were teacher experience and/or licensure level, content area, and students served.

Additionally, other stakeholders spoke more generally of the importance of local flexibility and decision-making around the teacher evaluation system.

Differentiation in Rubric and Process by Level of Experience

At the heart of many stakeholders' interest in creating a teacher evaluation system that takes into account a teacher's experience is creating a system that is more supportive, particularly for novice teachers.

"New teachers haven't felt supported because they aren't trained in the evaluation system. We need a system for new teachers where they understand what is expected of them. They need to understand what the domains mean. We also need to provide multiple mentors for new teachers."

- *Elementary Educators, Deming Stakeholder Meeting*

"We should be allowing for developmental stages of teaching. Novices shouldn't have the same number of categories as more experienced teachers.… We should not be grading them down due to a lack of experience."

- *Elementary Educators, Albuquerque Stakeholder Meeting*

Stakeholders were strongly in favor of a system that focuses on supporting and developing novice teachers, rather than one that demoralizes them and risks pushing them out of the profession. Recommendations include orienting new teachers on the expectations of the evaluation system and adapting the evaluation system into a coaching system for teachers in their first several years of teaching. The latter would avoid perceptions of punishing novice teachers while they develop their skills. Some groups expressed interest in evaluations not being a rigid process. Instead, the system would be differentiated for teachers based on their needs (e.g., frequency of observations would be flexible). Less frequently, some called for a grace period before teachers are held accountable for student achievement outcomes. Regardless of the exact approach taken, stakeholders stressed the importance of intentionally providing novice teachers—through the evaluation system—induction-like supports, such as access to experienced mentors, coaching, and additional attention in order to meets their needs.

Differentiation by Students Served

"Special circumstances of students should be considered (e.g., IEPs, BIPs)."

- *Elementary Educators, Española Stakeholder Meeting*

"There should be some mechanism in the evaluation system that values the kids you are working with. Classroom populations vary, and teachers are not accommodated in the teacher evaluation system for the makeup of students they teach.

- *Building Administrators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"Special education and ELL teachers should be evaluated by admin and teachers that understand these types of environments in order to take into account the special circumstances that are in these types of classrooms."

Multiple stakeholder groups raised the point that, for particular high-need student populations (e.g., medically fragile, visually impaired, special education, and gifted and talented education students), unique domains should be developed, communicated, and aligned statewide. They felt the needs of these student groups can be so unique and varied that a one-size-fits-all evaluation framework is not useful to assess their teachers. It would not help teachers improve their instructional practice because it would not reflect the needs and learning experiences of the students they serve.

Differentiation by Content Area

"Rubrics should be available for all subjects. Differentiate by what people are actually teaching."

- *Building Administrators, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

Some stakeholders felt that evaluations should have some degree of differentiation by content area. At the greatest degree of differentiation, stakeholders requested that rubrics be content-specific. Others recommended evaluators receive proper guidance, support, and training to understand high-quality instruction within whatever subject they are evaluating a teacher in. It was also suggested by a couple groups that differentiation by content area be addressed by allowing for peer observations and feedback, especially when an evaluator is not proficient in a given subject area.

Still, while some stakeholders recommended differentiation in evaluations through content-specific rubrics or different processes based on licensure level or experience, another sizable number of groups recommended domains and rubrics that were streamlined in order to be used with all teachers.

"Rubrics should be small enough and simple enough in scope that they can be used with all teachers. The goal should be flexibility that lends itself to differentiation for grade level and licensure level."

- *Elementary Educators, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

In this case, domain rubrics would be broad and flexible, placing the responsibility on well-trained evaluators to responsibly apply them to the classroom context regardless of content area, grade level, or teacher experience.

Allowing for Local Flexibility

"Districts should have a portion of the evaluation system that they can determine."

- *Secondary Educators, Las Vegas Stakeholder Meeting*

"Give some power back to teachers and schools. Give them authority over, say, 10% of the evaluation. Empower schools to focus on what they need, especially in terms of professional development."

- *Building Administrators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

Another dimension for differentiation in evaluation that stakeholders recommended was allowing for local autonomy. Some sought autonomy in terms of measuring student assessment or in determining the appropriate approach to teacher attendance, as noted previously. Several other groups around the state requested the authority to be able to determine how a portion (e.g., 10%) of their teachers' evaluation ratings are determined. One example raised was that if a particular district is focusing on including students receiving special education services into regular education classes, then evaluations could focus extra attention on how teachers serve their students with special needs.

Consistent with earlier quotes in this key takeaway, others spoke about local flexibility in the sense of being able to adapt rubrics to their unique context, whether that be in terms of student need, program assignment, or teacher experience. Understood in this way, there was broad interest in creating a responsive teacher evaluation system that reflects the diverse teaching and learning contexts in the state.

Key Takeaway 5: Building a Fair and Well-Supported System

In addition to the prior takeaways, stakeholders shared multiple suggestions to inform the redesign of the teacher evaluation system. These suggestions address process and implementation (widely available training to support transition; the importance of a manageable and user-friendly process; inclusion of a fair appeals process to address disagreements) as well as components of the system (availability of resources that demonstrate teacher performance levels).

Widely Available Training to Support Transition to New System

"Teachers and administrators [should be] co-trained for observations."

- *Elementary Educators, Española Stakeholder Meeting*

"All educators should be trained on evaluation criteria, not just the administration. This would act like a system of checks and balances to help ensure transparency."

- *Secondary Educators, Las Cruces Stakeholder Meeting*

"[There should be] clear standards and expectations—everybody is clear on what they are going to be evaluated on and in the domain language and what it looks like."

- *Secondary Educators, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

In community input sessions across the state, stakeholders strongly supported both teachers and administrators receiving training on the new teacher evaluation system. One important reason for this expanded training is that, in order for it to be truly focused on growth, teachers need to

clearly understand what they are being evaluated on as well as how to improve. In this way, the desire for training aligns to the recurring theme that this system should be oriented toward teacher development rather than operating as a punitive "gotcha" system.

As one group of secondary teachers in Las Cruces articulated, "Teachers should be aware of 'look-fors.' Train teachers on the evaluation system as well [as administrators] so everyone knows the process." This point was further emphasized by a group of building administrators in Farmington, who said, "Teachers and administrators need to have the same vision and interpretation of the science and art of teaching. Training is necessary [for that]."

It should also be noted that several groups voiced an interest in remaining engaged in the development of the re-envisioned teacher evaluation system after the community input sessions conclude. Teacher and administrator training provide one possible avenue for this.

Manageable and User-Friendly Evaluation Process

"[Evaluations should be] manageable and effective so principals are not burnt out, teaching improves, and we grow as a community."
- *Building Administrators, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"[The evaluation process] should be user-friendly. Teachers should be able to use data and apply it."
- *Community Members, Bernalillo Stakeholder Meeting*

Reducing the overall burden of the teacher evaluation system, especially on building administrators, was a consistent theme across the state. Many groups expressed interest in a system that is both manageable for everyone and user-friendly. This includes transparent, intelligible evaluation reports that teachers can understand and incorporate into their teaching; a user-friendly software interface for streamlined uploading of documentation; and, perhaps most importantly, a streamlined observation and evaluation process to reduce the burden on administrators.

At many community input sessions groups described the great lengths that administrators had to go to in order to complete teacher evaluations. Farmington building administrators shared the concern that "administrators should not be giving up weekends regularly in order to complete evaluations." Similarly, Gallup elementary teachers noted, "Principals can be consumed by the time it takes [to complete evaluations]. Everything else goes to the wayside."

Put simply, administrators and teachers want more time observing and talking about quality instruction and less time sitting at computers entering data. Stakeholders across New Mexico articulated that in order for the state to create a system that is truly focused on teacher growth and development, the system must be administratively feasible.

Fair Appeals Process to Address Disagreements and/or Unreflective Observations

"An appeal process should be created for teachers to rebut their evaluation."
- *Community Advocates, Farmington Stakeholder Meeting*

"If you disagree with an evaluator's conclusion, you should have the right to appeal it."
- *Secondary Educators, Albuquerque Stakeholder Meeting*

"Teachers should get another chance to redo a bad evaluation or one that they feel was not their best."
- *Elementary Educators, Ruidoso Stakeholder Meeting*

Stakeholder groups in input sessions across the state articulated the importance of the new teacher evaluation system having an appeals process for teachers who feel their observation or rating does not accurately reflect their work in and out of the classroom. This process would allow teachers to, for example, redo an observation or submit further evidence and documentation to address any gaps in their initial documented practice.

At the heart of this recommendation is the belief that a teacher evaluation system should be focused on educator growth and development. To effectively support improvement, the system needs to accurately assess an educator's performance. Multiple stakeholder groups shared that a poor observation or evaluation may occur, sometimes for reasons outside an educator's control. They did not feel it fair that their overall rating be dragged down by such an outlier.

Note: Implementation of multiple observations could complement the purpose of an appeal propose. By reducing the relative significance of any single observation on a final evaluation rating, educators are more likely to view evaluations as more authentically reflecting their teaching practice. When well implemented, both components could help build trust in the system.

Access to Resources and Exemplars That Demonstrate Levels of Teaching Defined in Rubrics

"We want exemplars—videos of what an awesome teacher looks like. We should be able to see those. Having videos takes some of the tension out of evaluations."
- *Secondary Educators, Deming Stakeholder Meeting*

Several stakeholder groups expressed an interest in having access to resources that demonstrate and illustrate teaching performance levels described in observation rubrics. For example, several educator groups were interested in the idea of a bank of exemplars of instruction at the various evaluation performance levels, perhaps even drawn from video evidence of New Mexico teachers.

These resources would not only serve to create a shared understanding of effective (and ineffective) instruction among teachers and evaluators, they would also elucidate a pathway to professional growth. By viewing gradated levels of performance, teachers would have concrete

examples of how to improve their instruction. These videos could be further coupled with video evidence of teachers' own instruction, comparing the two to illuminate strengths and areas for improvement.