Access to Quality Teaching: Myths, Facts, and Potential Policy Solutions for the Future

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“From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents, it’s the person standing at the front of the classroom... America’s future depends on its teachers.”

President Barack Obama, Remarks to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, March 10, 2009
Overview:

a. Performance and accountability
b. Three myths about teachers and schools
c. Strategies for moving forward
International Comparisons:

- In TIMSS, U.S. fourth graders scored 541 in math, near the middle of second-tier countries on TIMSS (ranked 11 of 50 countries)
- Eighth graders scored 509 in math. Which is barely (but significantly) higher than the 500 international average
- Eighth graders scored 525 in science, significantly above the international average and significantly below students from eight other nations
- In PISA test, among the 34 OECD countries, the U.S. performed below average in mathematics in 2012 and is ranked 27th
- In reading and science the U.S. performed close to the OECD average. The U.S. ranks 17 in reading, and 20 in science

# State Comparisons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>2013 NAEP ranking (out of 51)</th>
<th>Adjusted ranking</th>
<th>Change in ranking</th>
<th>Spending per student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$7,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>$8,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>$6,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$8,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$9,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-23</td>
<td>$6,580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chingos, M. (2015) Breaking the curve. Promises and pitfalls of Using NAEP data to assess the state role in student achievement. Table A.1 and Common Core of Data (CCD) 2012-2013
Increasing accountability

a. NCLB’s role
b. Part of a general accountability push
c. Consequence of greater data availability
d. Accountability is here to stay
Accountability comes to teachers

a. Natural extension of school-based accountability

b. Teachers matter a great deal to students

c. Race to the Top, NCLB prompt flood of legislation on teacher evaluation
Public opinion on teachers’ accountability

## Teachers’ attitudes towards teacher evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Never evaluated</th>
<th>Evaluated once every few years</th>
<th>Evaluated once a year</th>
<th>Evaluated more than once a year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Think they should be evaluated less often**
- **Think they are evaluated as often as they should often**
- **Think they should be evaluated more often**
Three myths about teachers and schools

a. The most affluent districts have the best schools

b. We know what good teaching is and how to screen for the best teachers

c. The most affluent schools have the best teachers
Myth 1: The most affluent districts have the best schools

a. Proficiency measures versus progress on proficiency measures

b. Misattribution problem

c. Fact check: good schools exist in all types of neighborhoods
Level of poverty and school performance

Source: Mark Ehlert, Cory Koedel, Eric Parsons and Michael Podgursky Choosing the right growth, http://educationnext.org/choosing-the-right-growth-measure/
Myth 2: We know what good teaching is and how to screen for the best teachers

a. Teacher qualifications versus teacher quality
b. Measuring teacher quality
c. Purposes of evaluation
## Identifying teacher quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Process-based measures</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensure / Certification</td>
<td>Observational ratings</td>
<td>Student test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>SLOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Student surveys</td>
<td>Student surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student non-test outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Myth 3: The most affluent schools have the best teachers

a. Misattribution problem once again
b. Yet, based in empirical findings
c. Fact check: great teachers exist in all types of schools
d. Implications for desegregation proposals
Access to Quality Teaching

Source: Mark Ehlert, Cory Koedel, Eric Parsons and Michael Podgursky Choosing the right growth, http://educationnext.org/choosing-the-right-growth-measure/
Strategies for moving forward

a. Less direct, more indirect
   i. Using evaluations to help teachers improve
   ii. Using performance data to staff teachers in non-traditional ways

b. Maybe we have our own misattribution problem
   i. Teachers in a school context
   ii. The value of curriculum