School Year 2017-18 Teacher and Principal Evaluation Results: 
A Descriptive Analysis of Effectiveness Ratings

Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement

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School Year 2017-18 Teacher and Principal Evaluation Results:
A Summary Analysis of Effectiveness Ratings
February 2019
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Introduction
This report summarizes the descriptive analysis for Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) data in school year 2017-18. Under the direction of Maryland’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) established the TPE model to measure teacher and principal effectiveness in Maryland public schools. During school year 2017-18, the MSDE Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement has met with Local School Systems (LSS) to determine how the TPE can assess the performance of students, schools, and teacher preparation programs to inform possible changes in the state default TPE model. This report reviews the results of TPE data and points out limitations so that the TPE framework can be revisited and improved.

TPE Data Reporting and Collection Process
In 2013, the MSDE established a TPE system to measure the effectiveness of teachers and principals in Maryland public schools. The Education Reform Act of 2010 and Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.07.09 describe the requirements for TPE in Maryland. A LSS may implement a locally developed model if it is approved by the LSS’s exclusive bargaining unit and the MSDE. If the LSS and the bargaining unit cannot reach consensus, the LSS must implement the state default model. The state default model is comprised of equally weighted professional practice and student growth components. Currently, work groups with various stakeholders have been convened to discuss revisions to the state default model.

The professional practice domain of the teacher evaluation system includes planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibility. The professional practice domains for the principal evaluation system align with outcomes in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework and Interstate School Leaders and Licensure Consortium Standards or the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, all school systems are required to align the professional practice domain for principals to the PSEL.

Student growth is a significant component of the model and is composed of multiple measures. Student growth may not be based solely on an existing or newly created single examination or assessment. As required by the law, no single measure represents more than 35 percentage points of the entire model.
LSSs were required to report effectiveness ratings of highly effective, effective, or ineffective. For the 2017-2018 school year, the MSDE added a fourth tier, developing, that a LSS may report. Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, all school systems will be required to report four effectiveness ratings: highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective. All teachers and principals are required to be evaluated annually. All principals, non-tenured teachers, and ineffective teachers are evaluated annually on professional practice and student growth. Tenured teachers who are rated as highly effective or effective can be placed on a three-year evaluation cycle where they are evaluated on the professional practice in year one and student growth annually.

LSSs submit TPE data through the TPE Secure Server. The window for TPE teacher file submission is June to September. The window for TPE principal file submission is July to October. Files are downloaded and analyzed, after the windows close, by the Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement.

2017-18 Teacher Results
Data from all 24 LSSs were provided during summer 2018. Please visit the TPE program page for the complete report to the Maryland State Board of Education and for the complete school-level data set.

High Level Results

Figure 1 compares teacher evaluation results from school year 2015-16 to school year 2017-18 at the state level. Over the past three years, there was a slight increase in the percentage of teachers rated highly effective. The percentage of teachers rated ineffective decreased in school year 2017-18, possibly as a result of the introduction of developing to the effectiveness rating. In school year 2017-18, 9 LSSs reported developing teachers. In prior years, most LSSs had a tradition of using a four-tiered model in which there was a category between effective and ineffective, usually described as “developing.” Developing teachers were grouped to either effective or ineffective for TPE data reporting by the LSS. Introduction of developing as a TPE teacher effectiveness rating improved the consistency and comparability across LSSs.
Figure 1. 97% of Teachers are Rated Highly Effective or Effective

Figure 2 displays the distribution of teacher ratings by LSS, sorted with the highest percentage of highly effective teachers at the top of the graph, descending to the lowest proportion at the bottom. N indicates the number of teachers reported in each LSS. The difference in distribution of effectiveness rating across LSS is obvious. For example, the percentage of highly effective teachers are reported ranging from 0% in Montgomery County to 90% in Garrett County.
Limitations of the data

There were 12 teachers missing effectiveness ratings in the 2018 TPE data set. The quality of data varied across LSS. For example, total effectiveness scores (maximum = 100) did not always align with the effectiveness rating in some LSSs.

The MSDE conducted a detailed review of records submitted by one of the largest LSSs. Of several thousand reported records the State found:

- Total effectiveness scores for effective teachers ranged from 6 to 116,
- Total effectiveness scores for highly effective teachers ranged from 4 to 126,
- Total effectiveness scores for ineffective teachers ranged from 8 to 80.

The main reason for mismatching effectiveness scores and ratings, according to the LSS, was that some teachers were not given an evaluation score annually. Therefore, effectiveness ratings and scores were
carried through from the most recent available years. However, different calculation methods applied to different years caused the discrepancy and affected the consistency of the scores.

This LSS is not the only one that does not perform entire evaluation cycle on teachers annually. Some LSSs allow qualified teachers to be completely evaluated on a three-year basis, which created a gap for annual TPE data reporting. As noted in previous year’s report (Feldman, 2017), LSSs approach TPE from different perspectives. While some districts have the capacity to use TPE data to inform decisions, others deal with it only as a state requirement.

Analyses focusing on school grade distribution

Figure 3 examines teacher ratings by the grade span configuration of the school in school year 2017-18. These grade spans are constructed as the typical elementary, K-5; middle, 6-8; and high 9-12; any other combination is under the category of combined grades. Combined schools may be K-8 or K-12 programs, typically found in Baltimore City, combined middle/high programs found in some small LSSs, or early grade programs typical of the Eastern Shore.

Elementary schools have the largest numbers of teachers, as well as the highest percentage of highly effective teachers. The percentage of ineffective teachers in elementary schools is also the lowest (2.19%), compared to middle schools (3.21%), high schools (3.01%) and combined schools (3.33%). By contrast, combined schools have the smallest number of teachers and lowest percentage of highly effective teachers. However, as combined schools are concentrated in a few LSSs, further research is needed to determine if the different rating is more of a product of local evaluation policy or school grade configuration.

Figure 3. Elementary Schools Have the Highest Percent of Highly Effective Teachers, and Lowest Percent of Ineffective Teachers

Analyses focusing of school demographic characteristics

Figures 4 and 5 examine ratings as disaggregated by school demographic variables, specifically the minority and poverty status. To determine poverty status, the MSDE uses the total number of students who receive Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs), in the numerator and the total school population in the denominator. The resulting percentages are then ranked within grade span across the entire state. The top quartile is high poverty; the bottom quartile is low poverty. Minority status is calculated similarly,
using the percentage of the nonwhite population for the numerator. The high minority flag is assigned to schools greater than the 75\textsuperscript{th} percentile and the low minority flag is assigned to schools in less than or equal to the 25\textsuperscript{th} percentile.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of teacher ratings, comparing schools in the high minority (>75\textsuperscript{th} percentile, high minority Y) category to the rest\textsuperscript{1}. Although there were less teachers working in high minority schools, the percentage of ineffective teachers was higher (6.36%), compared to other schools (1.09%). By contrast, the percentage of highly effective teachers in high minority schools (14.69%) was much lower than in other schools (46.48%).

Figure 4. High Minority Schools Have the Highest Percent of Ineffective Teachers

High poverty schools, compared to high minority schools, did not show as clear a stratification of teacher evaluation ratings. For instance, there were 1.97% of ineffective teachers and 42.91% highly effective teachers, which are not considerably different from state averages.

Figure 5 takes into consideration the combined effect of race and poverty. It shows that the highest percentage of highly effective teachers can be found in low minority and low poverty schools, while a much lower percentage of highly effective teachers can be found in high poverty and high minority schools (which was only 0.03% lower than the lowest category – see Figure 4).

\textsuperscript{1}There were 49 teachers whose schools cannot be identified for poverty/minority information. These teachers were excluded in Figure 4 and 5.
Figure 5. The Percentage of Highly Effective Teachers in High Minority and High Poverty Schools is 4 Times Lower than that in Low Poverty and Low Minority Schools

Analyses focused on teacher tenure and experience characteristics

Figure 6 illustrates the years of service and tenure for all teachers reported. LSSs submit teacher service and tenure status to the MSDE as part of the annual October Staff Data Collection. These data are reported as months of service. One full year of service is ten months. Thus, any teacher reported as zero to nine months was characterized as less than one year of service. Conversely, teachers with ten to 19 months of service are “1 to <2” years of service, and so forth through the distribution to the small set of teachers who have served more than 20 years in any LSS. The mean falls at 12 years of service and the median falls at 10 years of service\(^2\). Tenure is granted by LSS based on local policy after three years of employment.

Figure 6 demonstrates that as years of experience increase, there is an overall decreasing trend in the percentage of ineffective teachers. It also shows the difference in distribution of effectiveness rating between tenured and non-tenured teachers. Teachers are granted tenure after three years of satisfactory performance. As in previous years, the proportion of tenured to non-tenured teachers is approximately three to one. The percentage of ineffective teachers is lower among tenured teachers than non-tenured ones. This, however, is unlikely to be caused by tenure status. Instead, as Figure 6 shows, the decrease of percentage of ineffective (and developing) teachers is gradual as years of experience increases, showing no dramatic reduction at any threshold.

\(^2\) Excluding 18 teachers with no information on years of service
Figure 6. Percentage of Ineffective and Developing Teachers Decreases as Teachers’ Years of Experience Increase

Analyses focusing on evaluation models and weight

The Maryland State Teacher Evaluation Model—of which each LSS employs an approved local variant—is comprised of rating scores from professional practice domains and student growth domains. Student Growth is generally based on two Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), although some LSSs use three or four SLOs. Most LSSs, with 3 exceptions, adopted the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Professional Practice domains, including planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction and professional responsibilities. Figure 7 shows the majority of teachers in Maryland are evaluated by the Danielson Framework for Professional Practice. It is interesting to note that percentage of highly effective teachers is 10 times higher in LSSs using the Danielson Framework than those using other frameworks. The reason for this is that one of the three LSSs not using the Danielson Framework is Montgomery County, which is the largest LSS in Maryland, reported 99.48% of their teachers effective; consequently the overwhelming majority of teachers in the LLS not using Danielson Framework are evaluated as effective.
Most LSSs adopted a 50-50 weight model, which means out of 100 total points of the TPE score, 50 points are assigned to professional practice domains and 50 points to student growth domains. One LSS uses a 60-40 weight model, assigning 60 points to professional practice and 40 points to student growth. Three LSSs adopt a 70-30 model (70 points to professional development and 30 to student growth) and three LSSs adopt 80-20 model (80 points to professional development and 20 to student growth). The weighting scheme in Montgomery County is unknown and therefore excluded in Figure 8.

It is important to note that the nominal weights discussed above (eg. 50-50, 60-40, 70-30, 80-20) alone do not reflect the actual influence of each domain on teachers’ effectiveness rating. Instead, effective weight, which takes into account the variation in scores, has more important impact on evaluation results (Steinberg & Kraft, 2017). Therefore, equal weights (in a 50-50 model) assigned to professional practice and student growth do not mean each domain contribute equally to the overall variance of total effectiveness scores. However, a measure with zero effective weight can still affect the total score. For example, if the mean of professional practice score is higher than student growth, assigning more weight on professional practice will lead to higher overall scores and ratings. In fact, Figure 8 illustrates this scenario. The percentage of highly effective teachers in LSSs using greater weight on professional practice is noticeably higher than in LSSs using equal weight.
Figure 8. LSS Using Greater Weight on Professional Practice Have Higher Rate of Highly Effective Teachers

Not all LSSs use a point accumulation model. But for reporting purposes, the LSS would identify its maximum potential value for each component (points model) within their TPE model and the actual points the educator obtained (points obtained). To allow like-to-like comparison of results across LSSs, the percentage of points obtained (points obtained/points model * 100%) is used for each domain in professional practice and each SLO for student growth measures.

Figure 9 displays the average percentage of points earned by teachers in professional practice domains, grouped by effectiveness rating. The number immediately following each line is the number of teachers in each category. A trend that teachers with more favorable effectiveness ratings is associated with higher scores in almost all professional practice domains can be observed, with one exception: teachers rated as developing seem to perform better in professional responsibility domain, as their average percent obtained in this domain is almost as high as highly effective teachers'. The difference on average percent obtained in the four domains across teachers with different effectiveness rating is noticeable but not substantial.

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3 LEAs use decision matrices, scale scores, 4.0 scales or similar GPA kinds of models, or tests of statistical significance. Some LEAs do use a 100-point accumulation model.
4 Baltimore County did not report a point accumulation model for their teachers’ professional practice domain. Therefore, their data is not included in analysis on professional practice (Figure 9).
Figure 9. Highly Effective and Effective Teachers Score Higher in All Professional Practice Domains, whereas Developing Teachers Tend to Perform Better in Professional Responsibility Domain

Since the majority of teachers are evaluated by two SLOs for student growth, Figure 10 displays the average percentage of points earned by teachers for SLO1 and SLO2, grouped by effectiveness rating. The number immediately following each line is the number of teachers in each category. A more apparent trend is that teachers with more favorable effectiveness ratings are associated with higher scores in SLO1 and SLO2. The difference on average percent obtained in SLO1 and SLO2 across teachers with different effectiveness rating is more tangible compared to the difference on professional practice domains observed above. Further analysis is needed to determine whether the difference in SLO scores is more responsible for the difference in overall effectiveness rating, due to the influence of effective weight and variance among measures, which are not explored by this report.
Figure 10. Scores in Student Growth Seem to be Associated with Overall Effectiveness Rating

2017-18 Principal Results
For school year 2017-18, 23 LSSs (with the exception of Montgomery County) submitted 1,282 principal evaluation records, of which 5 LSSs reported developing as one of the effectiveness rating. Similar to the distribution of teacher effectiveness ratings, the majority of principals are rated highly effective or effective. Summary results at the state level in the last three years are displayed in Figure 11.

Figure 11. 93% of Principals are Rated Highly Effective or Effective

Figure 12 displays the range of principal effectiveness ratings at the LSS level, sorted by descending percentage of highly effective principals. N indicates the number of principals reported in each LSS. Similar to distribution of teacher rating, the distribution of principal rating varies dramatically across LSS. For
example, the percentage of highly effective principals ranges from 100% in Harford County to 0% in Caroline County.

Figure 12. LSS Range from Reporting 100% Highly Effective Principals to 0% Highly Effective Principals

Principal effectiveness distribution by school grade span
Similar to teacher results, combined schools have the lowest rate of highly effective principals (24.86%), compared to elementary schools (53.26%), middle schools (50.54%) and high schools (52.56%), as shown in Figure 13. Again, because combined schools are mostly from Baltimore City, which is a LSS with overall lower percent of highly effective principals, it is difficult to tell whether this is more of a product of LSS policy or grade configuration.
Figure 13. Schools with Combined Grades Have the Lowest Percent of Highly Effective Principals, and Highest Percent of Ineffective and Developing Principals

Principal effectiveness distribution by school demographic characteristics
Similar pattern on distribution of effectiveness rating in schools serving disadvantaged student groups can be found on principal data. Among all combination of schools with regard to their poverty and minority status, low poverty schools have the highest rate of highly effective principals (Figure 14). By contrast, high minority and high poverty schools have the lowest percent of highly effective principals (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Low Poverty Schools Have the Highest Rate of Highly Effective Principals

Figure 15. High Minority and High Poverty Schools Have the Lowest Percent of Highly Effective Principals

Analyses focused on principal experience characteristics
Principals’ years of experience is not collected in TPE data. Instead, new to the position and new to the building are used to provide information on principals’ experience. By common knowledge, if a principal is new to the position he/she has been a principal less than a year, whereas if to the new building, he/she has been in that school (whether as a principal or not) less than a year. However, this is not
clearly stated in the data collection process. Therefore, interpretation of these two measures can be different and consequently may cause inconsistency in data.

Figure 16 shows that the percentage (number) of developing and ineffective principals is much higher among those who have less experience (indicated by new to position and new to building). Not surprisingly, the percentage of highly effective principals among them is the lowest.

Figure 16. Principals New to Both Position and Building Have the Lowest Percent of Highly Effective Rating, and Highest Percent of Ineffective and Developing Ratings Combined

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**Principal evaluation models and weight**

Principal evaluation scores also come from measures for professional practice and student growth. Most LSSs assign equal weight (50-50) to professional practice and student growth, while some use heavier weight on professional practice. Figure 17 summarizes the distribution of principal effectiveness rating by LSS with same weighting scheme.
In school year 2017-18, 7 LSSs reported PSEL data for professional practice domains. In other words, there are 432 principals evaluated by PSEL and 850 by other frameworks. On the student growth side, most LSSs reported 2 SLOs\(^5\).

Figure 18 shows that there are a larger number and higher percentage of highly effective principals in LSSs not using PSEL. As PSEL data will be required to report for school year 2018-2019, it will be interesting to find out whether change to PSEL affects the distribution of principal effectiveness ratings.

Figure 19 shows the average percent obtained on each PSEL indicator among the LSS reported these data. The difference of the percentage suggests principals performed better (or at least scored higher)

\(^5\) The number of SLO reported to measure principals’ student growth domain varies from 0 to 4.
on some aspects (e.g., ethics and professional norms) than others (e.g., curriculum instruction and assessment)\(^6\).

**Figure 19. Average Percent Obtained in PSEL Standards Show Different Performance in Professional Practice Domains**

**Principal evaluation and the new Maryland accountability system**

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the state is required to revise its accountability system to measure each school’s overall performance. As part of the new accountability system adopted in 2018, more than 1,300 schools in Maryland are rated and assigned a star rating from 1 star (lowest rating) to 5 stars (highest rating). The star rating system compromises a variety of indicators. For elementary and middle schools, they are: ‘Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency, and School Quality and Student Success. For high schools, the indicators are Academic Achievement, Graduation Rate, Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency, Readiness for Postsecondary Success, and School Quality and Student Success’ (MARYLAND SCHOOL REPORT CARD USER’S GUIDE, 2018: 5).

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\(^6\) Average percent obtained on each SLO for principals is not included in this report. Due to the difference in number of SLO reported and how each SLO is measured, aggregation of average percent obtained of SLOs at state level is not informative.
Although the indicators used in the star rating system are different from indicators for principal evaluation, their end goals are closely connected. Figure 20 displays that principals’ ratings align with their schools’ rating. The higher the school rating, the higher percentage of highly effective principals are found. This seems to suggest that both school rating and principal evaluation share a common goal – to measure how effective schools are. While this alignment indicates evidence of principals’ accountability, it also cautions unintended consequence, that is, whether this would discourage principals to work in lower rated schools.

Figure 20. Percentage of Highly Effective Principals in 1-Star Schools is 4 Times Lower than in 5-Star Schools

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<th>No. Principals</th>
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<th>Effective</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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% of Principals

Discussion

This report presented a descriptive analyses on teacher and principal effectiveness ratings for school year 2017-18, using LSS reported data. It summarized the distribution of effectiveness ratings in association with educator, school and LSS characteristics. Teacher and principal effectiveness ratings share some common observations, and call for further analysis and/or actions:

1. The overwhelming majority of teachers and principals are rated as highly effective or effective. While this is a positive conclusion drawn from the TPE data, it raises questions when contrasted to the student achievement gap, particularly as measured by state assessments. It leads to a heated debate on what should be the focus of educator evaluation, professional standards or student achievement? An answer to this question is essential to the design of weighting of the professional practice and student growth domains, as well as threshold of different effectiveness ratings.

2. Schools’ minority and poverty status are associated with a smaller percentage of highly effective educators and larger percentage of ineffective/developing educators. Further research is needed to determine the cause of this association and solution to this situation.

3. Distribution of effectiveness rating varies vastly across LSS. It will be interesting to find out whether adoption of the new state default model (in progress) in the future will reduce this variance.
4. Average percent obtained on professional practice measures indicates educators’ performance differs in different areas (i.e. PSEL for principals and the Danielson Framework for Professional Practice domains for teachers). The areas educators get lower scores deserve more attention in planning professional learning experiences.

References
Feldman, B. (2017). ‘School Year 2016-17 Teacher and Principal Evaluation Results: A Summary Analysis of Effectiveness Ratings and Lessons Learned over the Duration of the Project’, Maryland State Department of Education.
