

Basic Features, Intended and Unintended Effects, and the Governor's Proposed Changes to New York State's APPR System

Basic features of current system	Intended effects	Unintended effects	Governor's proposal
Using multiple measures to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness, each focusing on evidence of student learning	Hold each teacher accountable for student learning measured from various perspectives	Evaluations are complex & time-consuming. Having no way to reconcile inconsistent evidence generates confusion. Teachers are often found ineffective or developing by one measure and effective by another, or effective overall one year and not the next.	Reduces measures of effectiveness to two, test scores (or approved substitute) and independent observation
Using state test scores (when available) to evaluate effectiveness ("first 20%")	Align criteria for assessing teachers with tests used to assess students & districts	Commits State to heavy use of tests and rapid implementation of Common Core tests; promotes teaching to tests and competition among teachers for strong students; discourages teacher collaboration & experimentation.	Increases weight for test scores (where available) from 20% to 50%
Translating raw test scores into measures based on his/her students' growth, compared to growth of similar students statewide	Focus on student growth, not absolute achievement, and isolate each teacher's impact, controlling for factors beyond teacher's control	Statistical adjustments have rendered test score data uninterpretable and useless for guiding improvement; imply that teachers aren't responsible for low performance of disadvantaged or high-needs students.	No explicit mention of growth measures or statistical controls; presumably he means to retain them.
Using local growth measures for the "first 20%" for those without test scores	Provide alternate growth measures where tests scores aren't available	Most teachers (perhaps 80%) are evaluated on these alternative measures, not on test score growth.	No change in this provision, but differences between those with and without test data would be magnified.
Using local growth measures for the "second 20%" of all teachers' total scores	Hold district & teachers responsible for identifying other measures of student growth reflecting key learning objectives	Experience with "student learning objectives" varies widely; they generate serious discussions about teaching in some districts, "gaming" the system in others.	The Governor proposes to eliminate this second measure of student learning.

Basic features of current system	Intended effects	Unintended effects	Governor's proposal
Using State-approved rubrics for evaluation by principal or other trained evaluators (and possibly other kinds of evidence) for the remaining 60%, locally-negotiated.	Ensuring rigorous assessments by principals & other trained observers, using research-based rubrics	Again, experience varies widely. Some districts require principals to give careful attention to their observation and rating of teachers, others require only basic BOCES training and provide little oversight. Using the State-approved rubrics requires considerable time. Little attention is given to how evaluators discuss evaluations with teachers.	Reduces the weight of observations from 60% to 50%. Unclear if the current options to use parent and student surveys and peer observers are to be dropped. Reference to different "independent observers" apparently meant to limit or eliminate a building principal's responsibility for evaluating his/her own teachers.
Combining 20-20-60 scores, then assigning a teacher to one of four categories, for an overall measure of effectiveness	Distinguish highly effective & effective teachers from those who are "developing" or "ineffective" and who need improvement plans	Many teachers believe that the APPR system reflects disrespect for teachers and a desire to blame them for schools' weaknesses; little attention given to how evaluation evidence or feedback can be used to help teachers improve. But some districts have implemented APPR more successfully.	Governor proposes 50-50 weighting, with the State specifying the cutoffs for how different levels of performance would be assigned. No criteria for setting these cutoffs are mentioned.
Linking personnel decisions to evaluation scores	Provide carrots to acknowledge excellence and sticks to compel improvement or removal	The more personnel decisions are tied to evaluations, the more evaluations will be seen as punitive, promote competition among teachers, and discourage open dialogue on ways of improving teaching. In some cases, those risks may be worth taking, but they are reasons for caution.	The Governor would tie teacher evaluations to tenure conferral, allocation of annual "teacher excellence" bonuses, and removal under 3020-a procedures.