

Teachers to Be Measured Based on Students' Standardized Test Scores

By JENNIFER MEDINA, New York Times
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New York City is beginning to measure the performance of thousands of elementary and middle school teachers based on how much their students improve on annual state math and reading tests. To avoid a contentious fight with the teachers' union, the New York City Department of Education has agreed not to make public the reports — which described teachers as average, below average or above average with various types of students — nor let them influence formal job evaluations, pay and promotions. Almost 135,000 people work full-time in New York City's public school system with the shared mission to provide the 1.1 million students with an education that gives them the tools to thrive in college, in careers, and as active members of their communities.

The State Legislature this spring prohibited the use of student test scores in teacher tenure decisions. The new measurement system — called "teacher data reports" — is an expansion of a pilot program that the city began in January involving about 2,500 teachers at 140 schools. The pilot program was so controversial that several participating principals did not tell teachers they were being monitored.

The reports classify each teacher as average, above average or below average in effectiveness with different categories of students, like those who score in the top third or the lowest third on the test, and those still learning English or enrolled in special-education programs. It also contains separate measurements on effectiveness in teaching boys and girls, though it does not distinguish performance by students' race or income level. Teachers will also be given a percentile ranking indicating how their performance compares to those who teach similar students and to a citywide pool.

There have been similar efforts across the country, as politicians and academic experts say that teachers are the most important element in improving student performance and closing the gap in achievement between white and minority students. School systems in Texas and Tennessee, for example, have used student performance and improvement as a tool to evaluate teachers. New York City plans to generate reports for roughly 18,000 teachers — every math and English teacher in fourth through eighth grades.

Amy McIntosh, the Education Department's chief talent officer, who helped develop the system, said that her team would continue to explore ways to monitor the effectiveness of the city's nearly 60,000 other public school teachers, but that for now the state tests were the only data on which to reliably base evaluations of them. Last year's pilot program also attempted to measure how well a principal's perception of teachers aligned with the student test score data. According to the Education Department, about 69 percent of the teachers whom principals rated "exceptional" were in the top half on the reports. And 73 percent of those whom principals called "fair, poor or very poor" were in the bottom half.

1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons regarding teachers being evaluated via a series of performance-based assessments. Construct a Venn Diagram to organize your thoughts. As a student, do you agree with the teacher data reports? Explain. **(GPS – Grades 6 – 8: MRC a, d)**
2. Identify the approximate number of teachers presently employed as a math and English teacher in fourth through eighth grades with the New York City public school system as a fraction, decimal, and percent. What percentages of the overall teachers have already participated in the pilot program administered this past January? Determine the LCD and GCF between the two numerical figures expressed in the passage above as a percentage provided by the Education Department referencing principal's perception of teachers. **(GPS - Grade 6: M6P1 – M6P5; MRC; M6N1 a, c, f, g)**
3. Translate the following two verbal phrases into algebraic expressions: a) The total of all students increased by the product of the sum of teachers and the additional 57,000 full-time employees and b) The difference between every math and English teacher in fourth through eighth grades and full-time employees reduced by the number of schools which participated in the pilot in Jan. Communicate your mathematical thinking clearly and coherently via interpreting and solve these two equations using either the communicative, associative, and/or distributive properties as appropriate. Explain the process of converting words into variables and algebraic expressions. **(GPS Grade 7: M7P1 – M7P5; MRC; M7A1 a, b, c; M7A2 a)**
4. Translate all of the applicable verbal phrases in question three into a series of algebraic expressions and solve. At a constant rate of growth of five percent, create a table and graph the results of projected students in the city of New York for the next five decades in five year increments. What inferences may be made regarding this transition? Interpret the slope as a rate of change and determine if a linear or nonlinear relationship exist. **(GPS Grade 8: M8P1 – M8P5; M8A1 a, b, d, e; M8A4 a – c, f, g; M8A5d; M8D4a)**
5. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2008-09 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer interchangeably as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and circle graph. **(GPS – Grade 6: M6N1f, g; M6D1c; Grade 7: M7D1f)**
6. Using contextual clues only, define the following italicized words: *distinguish*, *percentile*, *contentious*, and *aligned* obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(GPS – Grades 6 –8: MRC a, c, d)**

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) adapted from georgiastandards.org. Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with the curriculum map and annotated adjacent to the respective grade level inquiry.

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