

EDUCATION

FINANCE

AND POLICY

EFP Takeaways

Is Effective Teacher Evaluation Sustainable? Evidence from District of Columbia Public Schools

Background

Ten years ago, many education reformers championed teacher evaluation reform as a solution for improving teacher workforce effectiveness and student outcomes. The initial enthusiasm for these reforms has waned in the face of serious implementation challenges and mixed evidence of efficacy. Even if initial reform efforts were successful, they may be difficult to sustain. In vol. 16 issue 2 of *EFP*, Thomas Dee, Jessalynn James, and Jim Wyckoff examine the longer-run effects of IMPACT, the prominent and controversial teacher-evaluation reform in DCPS. Prior research suggested that IMPACT initially improved teacher performance. IMPACT design has been shifted to deemphasize value-added teacher evaluations, and to increase performance standards for lower performing teachers.

The Study

The authors examined the descriptive dynamics of teacher retention and performance. A regression discontinuity design was used to evaluate IMPACT's high-powered dismissal threat. Specifically, the authors examined the effects on retention and performance when teachers were rated as "Minimally Effective" instead of "Developing"; or rated "Effective" rather than "Developing." Teachers rated as "Minimally Effective" must improve immediately or face dismissal, while a rating of "Developing" allows teachers two years to improve their rating.

For more details:

- View the [full issue](#).
- See the [full article in Education Finance and Policy](#).
- [Sign up here to receive future EFP Takeaways](#).
- Summary of:
Dee, Thomas S., James, Jessalynn, & Wyckoff, Jim. (2021). Is Effective Teacher Evaluation Sustainable? Evidence from District of Columbia Public Schools. *Education Finance and Policy*, 16(2).

Findings

Analysis indicated that, under IMPACT, lower-performing teachers (i.e., those rated as "Minimally Effective" or "Developing") were more likely to either leave DCPS or improve their teaching performance. In particular, the dismissal threat associated with low performance caused persistently low-performing teachers to exit DCPS, or to improve for those who return. The effects of IMPACT's incentives on retention and performance among low-performing teachers were similar in magnitude to what they were in the first years of IMPACT (Dee and Wyckoff, 2015). Such results provide support for the claim that effective teacher evaluation can be implemented at scale, as well as sustained over time. Findings from this study have important applications to national discussions on teacher evaluation systems.

Estimated Effects of IMPACT Ratings on Low-Performing Teachers



* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

N/A: Developing rating category did not exist under IMPACT 2.0