



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# Use of Teacher and Principal Evaluation Scores in Human Resource Decisions 2019

Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.405.100](#)

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## **Executive Summary**

RCW 28A.405.100 (8) requires that districts use teacher and principal evaluation results as one factor in human resource decisions. These decisions include, but are not limited to, staff assignments and reduction in force.

In previous years, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has surveyed districts about this in the School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES). This year, these questions were pulled out of SEES and asked in a stand-alone district survey to ensure they received focused attention.

The results vary widely by district size and by the type of human resource decision. OSPI will work with school districts and with their education partners to remind them of this section of the TPEP statute and ensure compliance. OSPI will also revise the survey design to capture more accurate information.

## Introduction

A new set of evaluation processes and criteria for teachers and principals was created with HB 6696 (2010) and HB 5895 (2012), the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP). Since the 2015–16 school year, this system has been required for nearly all teachers and principals<sup>1</sup> in Washington. Per RCW 28A.405.100 (8), this report details the current status of district use of TPEP scores for human resource decisions:

(8)(a) Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, evaluation results for certificated classroom teachers and principals must be used as one of multiple factors in making human resource and personnel decisions. Human resource decisions include, but are not limited to: Staff assignment, including the consideration of an agreement to an assignment by an appropriate teacher, principal, and superintendent; and reduction in force. Nothing in this section limits the ability to collectively bargain how the multiple factors shall be used in making human resource or personnel decisions, with the exception that evaluation results must be a factor.

(b) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must, in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, report to the legislature and the governor regarding the school district implementation of the provisions of (a) of this subsection by December 1, 2019, and December 1, 2020.

## Background

Currently, teachers and principals are evaluated on eight state instructional (teachers) or leadership (principals) criteria in their first three years in the profession or their first year in a new district, and every sixth year thereafter as long as their practice is proficient. The Comprehensive evaluation process includes setting three student growth goals. Evidence of practice is collected and scored. The final score is determined using a statewide formula.

A teacher or principal undergoes a Focused evaluation in years when a Comprehensive evaluation is not performed. This involves providing evidence of practice on one of the eight criteria and setting one student growth goal. Teachers and principals are encouraged to set a “stretch” goal during this period.

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers in some specialized roles (e.g., instructional coaches, library/media specialists who do not teach, etc.) are not evaluated on TPEP because they do not perform all duties in the state’s eight evaluation criteria.

## **School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES)**

To comply with both state and federal reporting requirements, districts are surveyed each year to report their teacher evaluation scores (aggregated by school) and principal evaluation scores (aggregated by district). They also provide evaluation information for non-instructional certificated staff, classified staff, and the superintendent. In addition, this survey asks how the results of the evaluation are being used to make human resource decisions about teachers and principals. It was not clear that these questions were generating actionable data in past years. Therefore, in 2019, these questions were separated into a short survey of their own that prompted districts to provide some additional context. These results form the basis of this report.

### **2019 Survey**

In the 2019 survey, districts were asked about their use of TPEP scores to make the following human resource decisions for teachers and principals:

- Staff Assignment
- Reduction in Force (RIF)
- Probable Cause for Non-renewal of Contract
- Beginning or Ending Probation for Experienced Employees
- Conversion from Provisional to Continuing Status (teachers only)
- Instructional (teachers) or Leadership (principals) Growth
- Professional Learning
- Compensation
- Promotion
- Recognition
- Development of Teacher Leadership (teachers only)

Respondents were asked to indicate how they used TPEP scores for each decision above from the following choices:

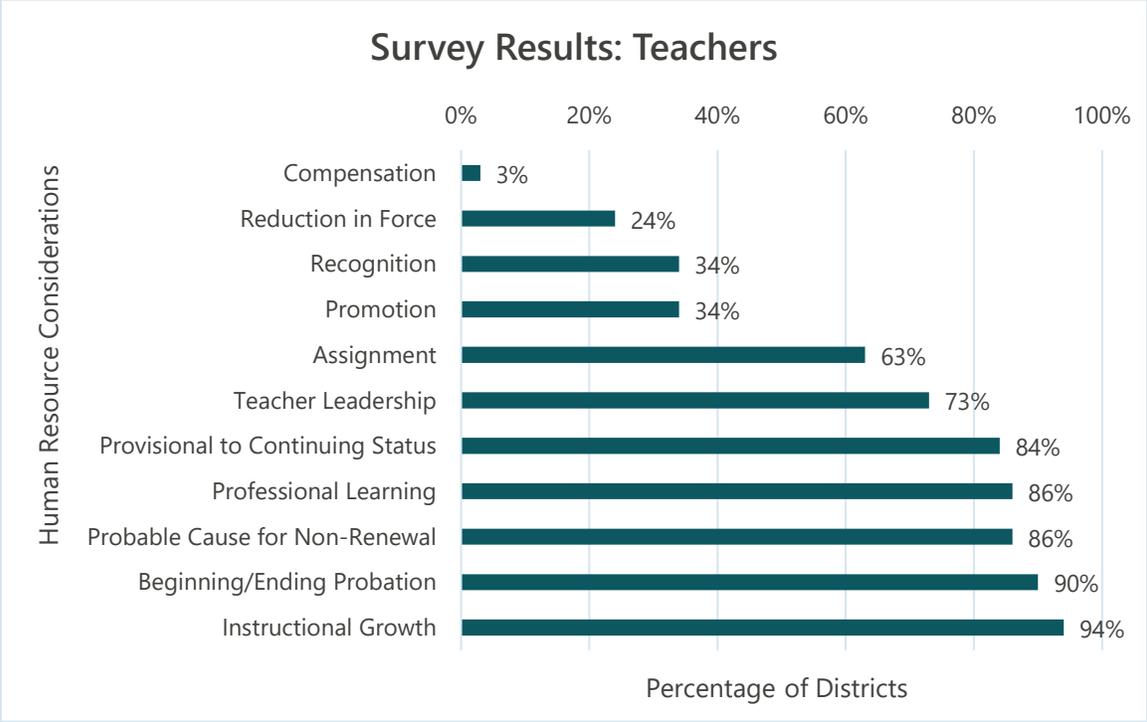
- Use as a significant factor
- Use as one of several factors
- Refer to them
- Do not use
- Other (with an explanation)

The responses below come from 285 of 295 school districts. The topics are presented in order of use by districts. Because the legislation only specifies that "consideration" be measured, and not the degree of it, consideration was determined by adding the first three categories and any

“Other” response that indicated use of the scores. All responses can be found in Appendix A (Teachers and Principals).

## Survey Results: Teachers

The survey results for the use of teacher evaluation scores in human resource decisions indicate wide variety among districts, depending on the type of decision (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Percentage of districts using teacher evaluation scores as a factor in human resource decisions

Each factor below is considered with its overall percentage of use, and additional insights from the “Other” category:

1. **Instructional Growth: 94%**

Making decisions about areas for instructional growth, both individual and school-wide or district-wide, was the most common use of TPEP scores.

2. **Beginning/Ending Probation: 90%**

A number of districts that chose “other” on this question chose it because they are small and have not yet experienced this situation. This may have been why some other districts chose “Do not use TPEP scores,” but it’s not possible to determine this from the survey. This

question had the highest percentage of respondents indicating TPEP scores as a “significant” factor in decision-making.

3. **Probable Cause for Non-renewal: 86%**

Again, some respondents indicated “Other” when they had not experienced this situation; it’s possible others chose “Do not use.” Districts are not required to give a reason when non-renewing a provisional status teacher; this may have played a role in the responses to this question.

4. **Professional Learning: 86%**

“Other” responses to this area indicate that professional learning decisions may be made at the school or district level, and Human Resources staff may not be “in the loop” on how this is happening.

5. **Conversion from Provisional to Continuing Status: 84%**

As in #3, the fact that districts are not required to give a reason when non-renewing provisional status teachers may have played a role in responses.

6. **Teacher Leadership: 73%**

This is a human resource action that has traditionally been based on quality performance. “Other” results indicated that principals may use this for school-based decisions.

7. **Assignment: 63%**

The “Other” write-ins indicated that for small districts with, perhaps, only one teacher at each grade level or with a specific endorsement, moving teachers around is not generally an option. Larger systems indicated that they use scores to ensure that teachers on a plan of improvement stay with the same supervisor. Scores might be used in the case of a tie when teachers are vying for the same job. One large district with frequent turnover noted this obviated the need for RIFs and tough decisions about assignments. Teachers can usually have the assignment they want.

8. **Promotion: 34%**

In many systems, there are few opportunities for promotion other than moving to an administrative position, which requires a number of other actions to realize.

9. **Recognition: 34%**

Despite statutory language encouraging this for teachers whose practice receives a summative score of “4” (Distinguished), it appears many districts do not provide such

recognition. Very small districts may not have any teachers who receive this summative score.

#### 10. **Reduction in force (RIF): 24%**

Several districts in the "Other" category stated that they have never had a RIF, or explained how it was used. Others who chose this answer stated that they follow their collective bargaining agreement (CBA), which seems to imply this was not included in the agreement.

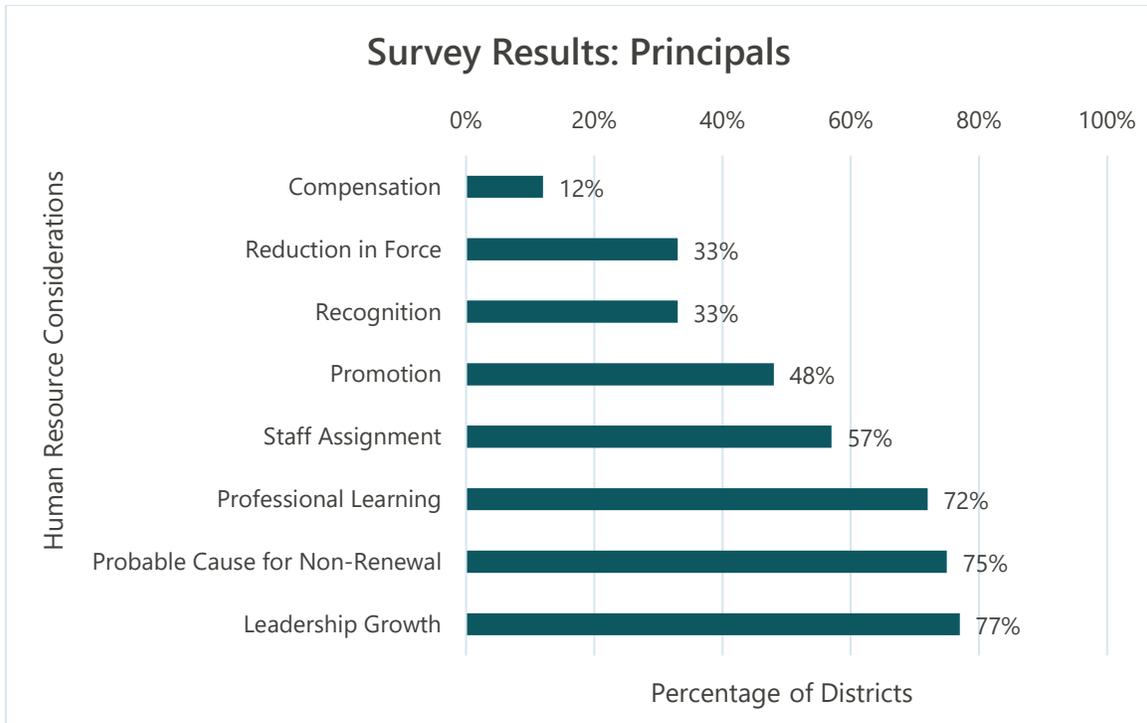
#### 11. **Compensation: 3%**

In a state with a long history of a state salary allocation model based on education and years of experience, it makes sense very few would consider evaluation scores for compensation.

## **Survey Results: Principals**

Principal evaluation scores are used less frequently for human resource decisions than teacher scores (See Figure 2 below). For some factors, this can be explained by the large number of small districts, which may have no principal (only a superintendent/principal) or just one. This makes it impossible to use TPEP scores for some human resource decisions (e.g., assignment). The survey did not account for this in the questions; a district without a principal or with only one may have marked the response that they do not use TPEP scores, or they may have marked "Other," and then shared this situation. This is a survey design flaw.

Principal employment differs from teacher employment in that principals do not have a formal, statutory "provisional" period, serving as at-will employees in most districts. They also have no formal "probation" period. In addition, the survey did not ask about principal leadership roles, as these are atypical.



**Figure 2:** Percentage of districts using principal evaluation scores as a factor in human resource decisions

## Conclusion and Next Steps

District use of TPEP scores in human resource decisions seems to be based largely on the following:

- Greater use in areas where quality measures have always been used (probation, move from provisional to continuing status) and less in areas where seniority has typically been the key consideration (reduction in force, compensation, assignment)
- A belief that these scores can provide important information for professional growth at both the individual and the school/district level
- The size of the district system, which may make use of some data impossible or impractical
- For some districts, a lack of awareness of the provisions of RCW 28A.405.100

The results suggest several courses of action. First, while professional organizations and OSPI were clear about communicating the requirements of the law when districts first implemented TPEP, this law was complex. Not all provisions of the statute may have made it into the collective bargaining agreements negotiated in the early years. Later negotiations were focused on refining what had already been discussed. As many districts' agreements are open this year

or will be in the next, it would make sense for OSPI to remind districts of the requirement to consider TPEP scores in human resource decisions.

Second, the TPEP Steering Committee members had developed a list of potential human resource decisions for the School Employee Evaluation Survey several years ago. In light of what has been learned regarding the impact that district size has on the possibilities for using evaluation data, the Steering Committee should revisit this list.

Third, based on some lack of clarity in these results, OSPI should revise the survey itself to ensure it is generating accurate and actionable data.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Survey Results

Full survey results: Use of teacher and principal evaluation scores in human resource decisions



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