

For Immediate Release

Contact: Ashley Dixon

Tel: (617) 496-9457

Email: [ashley\\_dixon@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:ashley_dixon@gse.harvard.edu)



Center for Education Policy Research  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

## **REPORT FINDS THAT PRACTICE-BASED TEACHER EVALUATIONS CAN BE VALUABLE TOOL IN ASSESSING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS**

### **New study shows teachers' ratings on TNTP's *Performance Assessment System (PAS)* are linked to student achievement.**

The Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at Harvard University today releases a new report examining how reliably a portfolio system can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of early-career teachers. The report, "Are Practice-Based Teacher Evaluations and Teacher Effectiveness Linked in TNTP's *Performance Assessment System (PAS)*?" examines the evaluation system for first-year Louisiana teachers trained by TNTP, a national nonprofit organization focused on improving teacher performance.

In this study, the authors examine the PAS, a teacher evaluation portfolio system that TNTP uses as one measure to assess teacher effectiveness when making certification recommendations through its TNTP Academy teacher preparation program in Louisiana. Each teacher's PAS portfolio is rated by at least two TNTP assessors and includes a sample instructional unit, videotaped lesson, classroom observation report, stakeholder survey results, and a student achievement report.

Two key findings emerge:

- First, there is a modest positive relationship between teachers' PAS scores and actual student achievement growth in math and reading. In other words, a teacher with a higher PAS score is somewhat more likely to achieve greater learning gains with his or her students than a teacher with a lower PAS score.
- Second, while the PAS system collects an immense amount of detailed data about TNTP-trained teachers, much of that information is lost as teacher ratings are collapsed into a select group of categories designed to assess teacher performance holistically. This analysis suggests that, with some technical improvements, the PAS could become an even better predictor of student academic outcomes.

This report is especially relevant given the nation's current focus on finding meaningful ways to assess teacher performance. Across the nation, state and district education officials are working to design and

implement comprehensive teacher evaluation systems that include teacher impact on student learning as a central measure of teacher performance. Most such efforts aim to include multiple measures of teacher performance, including valid proxies for student achievement data when direct evidence of student learning growth is not available. TNTP is exploring the use of the PAS as an element of its Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness, through which TNTP-trained teachers are required to demonstrate their ability to advance student achievement in order to be recommended for certification.

Jon Fullerton, the Executive Director of CEPR, noted that “TNTP is to be commended for undertaking a project to analyze and learn from their performance assessment data. As new teacher evaluation systems are rolled out across the country, we hope that many agencies follow TNTP’s lead to carefully examine the results of their system, learn what is working and what is not, and make changes to improve.”

“Teachers’ qualifications and training tell us something about their likelihood of becoming effective, but their early career performance in the classroom tells us much more,” said Tim Daly, President of TNTP. “This study validates the usefulness of portfolios to shed light on our teachers’ performance, and its recommendations will help us further refine the PAS as we aim to award certification exclusively to teachers capable of making a real difference for students.”

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### **Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University**

The rapid accumulation of student achievement data by states and school districts represents an untapped national resource that promises to break longstanding stalemates in the American education policy debate. By partnering with education and policy leaders to help address their most pressing challenges, The Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) represents a new paradigm in education research and has become a focal point for education policy researchers across Harvard and around the United States.

### **TNTP**

TNTP strives to end the injustice of educational inequality by providing excellent teachers to the students who need them most and by advancing policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom. A national nonprofit organization founded by teachers, TNTP is driven by the knowledge that effective teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other school factor. In response, TNTP develops customized programs and policy interventions that enable education leaders to find, develop and keep great teachers. Since its inception in 1997, TNTP has recruited or trained approximately 49,000 teachers - mainly through its highly selective Teaching Fellows programs - benefiting an estimated 8 million students. TNTP has also released a series of acclaimed studies of the policies and practices that affect the quality of the nation’s teacher workforce, including The Widget Effect (2009) and Teacher Evaluation 2.0 (2010). Today TNTP is active in more than 25 cities, including 10 of the nation’s 15 largest.