EVALUATING TEACHING:

A Guide to Current Thinking and Best Practice

Preface

There is renewed interest in the role of teacher evaluation as a fundamental aspect of school improvement. To a large extent, this interest in teacher evaluation comes from the realization that any significant improvement in schooling must have the teacher at its heart. And, just as there is a rational connection between school improvement and teacher performance, there is a necessary and rational connection between teacher improvement and teacher evaluation.

This volume synthesizes current research and thinking about teacher evaluation and blends that research with practice. Each chapter is rich with illustrations and examples as we attempt to make a strong research-practice connection. Additionally, a question and answer format is included in each chapter to enhance the utility of the book and its practical applications.

The book is organized into 13 chapters and three major sections. In the introductory chapter, "Improving Schools through Teacher Evaluation," I suggest that "a conceptually sound and properly implemented evaluation system for teachers is a vital component of successful reform efforts." The chapter discusses key features of effective teacher evaluation systems and offers one model for designing a quality teacher evaluation system for school improvement and teacher growth.

Part 1, *Designing a Teacher Evaluation System,* begins with a chapter by Patricia Wheeler and Michael Scriven, "Building the Foundation: Teacher Roles and Responsibilities," in which they describe foundations for teacher evaluation and then focus on roles and responsibilities of the teacher as a desirable foundation. In Chapter 3, "Applying the Personnel Evaluation Standards to Teacher Evaluation," Barbara Howard and James Sanders provide

background and implications for using the Standards in teacher evaluation. Pamela Tucker and Marguerita DeSander discuss the legal context and parameters for designing and conducting teacher evaluations in Chapter 4, "Designing Legally Defensible Teacher Evaluation Systems."

Part 2, *Assessing Teacher Performance*, provides a rationale and explores application issues for using multiple data sources in assessing teacher performance. In Chapter 5, "Classroom-based Assessments of Teaching and Learning," Sally Zepeda offers a call for going beyond teacher evaluation by using classroom-based observations for assessing teaching and learning through instructional supervision. Laura Ostrander and I offer guidance for using parent, student, and peer feedback in "Client Surveys in Teacher Evaluation." In Chapter 7, "Student Achievement and Teacher Evaluation," Pamela Tucker and I discuss promising approaches to using student learning data in the evaluation of teachers' work. Kenneth Wolf, Gary Lichtenstein, and Cynthia Stevenson describe the benefits, liabilities, and applications of portfolios in Chapter 8, "Portfolios in Teacher Evaluation." In Chapter 9, "Teacher Self-Evaluation," Peter Airasian and Arlen Gullickson describe a process in which teachers make judgments about their own performance for the purpose of self-improvement. In the last chapter in Part 2, Kenneth Peterson explains the data sources that can provide a more in-depth view of teacher quality.

Part 3, *Implementing the Teacher Evaluation System*, explores often neglected, but important issues in the successful application of an effective evaluation system. In Chapter 11, "Conducting a Successful Evaluation Conference," Virginia Helm draws heavily from the business and professional literature to describe how evaluation conferences can serve as a key component in an ongoing communication and feedback cycle. Mary Jo McGrath discusses

factors that should be incorporated on a day-to-day basis in "Dealing Positively with the Nonproductive Teacher." And finally, in Chapter 13 Stephen Gordon makes a case for the vital connection between teacher evaluation and professional development in the successful school process.

Taken collectively, *EVALUATING TEACHING: A Guide to Current Thinking and Best Practice* represents our attempt to provide a coherent and comprehensive approach to designing, implementing, and monitoring quality teacher evaluation systems. Our goal is to provide a framework for improvement - improvement of the teacher, improvement of the school and, ultimately, improvement in student performance. We trust that our intended readers - school practitioners (principals, supervisors, staff development specialists, superintendents), graduate students, and researchers of teacher evaluation - find the text to be true to this purpose and of value in their work.

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