

MEASURES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING PROJECT

The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project, a three-year undertaking funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, involved nearly 3,000 teacher volunteers from seven public school districts: Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Hillsborough County, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; New York, New York; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Participants included elementary school teachers of math and English language arts (grades 4-8); high school teachers of algebra I, biology, and English (grade 9); and teams of researchers from nearly two dozen universities and education organizations.

The MET Project shed new light on identifying and measuring teacher effectiveness. The critical next step is identifying best practices and bringing them to scale. NEA and the MET Project agree that:

- ▶ **Teacher evaluation systems should use multiple measures.** Different measures—e.g., student surveys, classroom observations, value-added scores on state tests—capture different dimensions of teaching effectiveness.
- ▶ **Multiple measures produce more consistent results than value-added scores alone.** Using more than one measure is critical—the strengths of some measures balance out the weaknesses of others.
- ▶ **Existing evaluation measures may not capture important aspects of teaching effectiveness.** None of the measures used in the MET Project did a very good job of identifying teachers who were effective at improving student performance on alternative, more conceptually demanding tests. As states transition to the Common Core assessments that test students' higher-order thinking and reasoning skills, they will likely need to develop new measures of teachers' ability to increase this type of student learning. It will be critically important for teachers and their representatives to be involved in the process. As the MET Project showed, the choice of measures matters—a lot. Which teachers are identified as effective depends on what the particular evaluation system emphasizes.
- ▶ **How each measure in a teacher evaluation system is weighted can vary within a reasonable range.** There is no hard-and-fast rule that value-added scores must count for 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation score, even though many states and districts have adopted this formula. Ultimately, weighting should depend on thoughtful judgments about the relative importance of different aspects of teaching and the trade-offs involved—e.g., time, cost, and accuracy.
- ▶ **Classroom observations must be conducted by multiple, well-trained observers.** Accurate observations required two or more lessons, evaluated by different observers.