

# Principal Evaluation: Lessons Learned, Lessons Yet To Come

**Presented at the Panel Discussion on  
Examining Policy and Practice Trends  
Impacting Leadership Evaluation  
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*Data... Insight... Impact*

# Acknowledgements

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# Background

- The Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative
  - Six school districts: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Denver Public Schools, Gwinnett County Public Schools, Hillsborough County Public Schools, New York City Department of Education, and Prince George's County Public Schools
  - The six districts include 1.6 million students; 2,500 principals; 5,000 assistant principals; and 119,000 teachers
  - Key Partners include: NY Leadership Academy, CCSSO, UCEA, AASA, National SAM Innovation Project, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, NGA, Learning Forward, and others
- Three Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
  - Clinical Practice: Internships and Mentoring Backgrounder
  - Aspiring Leader Programs: District/Provider Partnerships
  - Leader and Teacher Evaluation

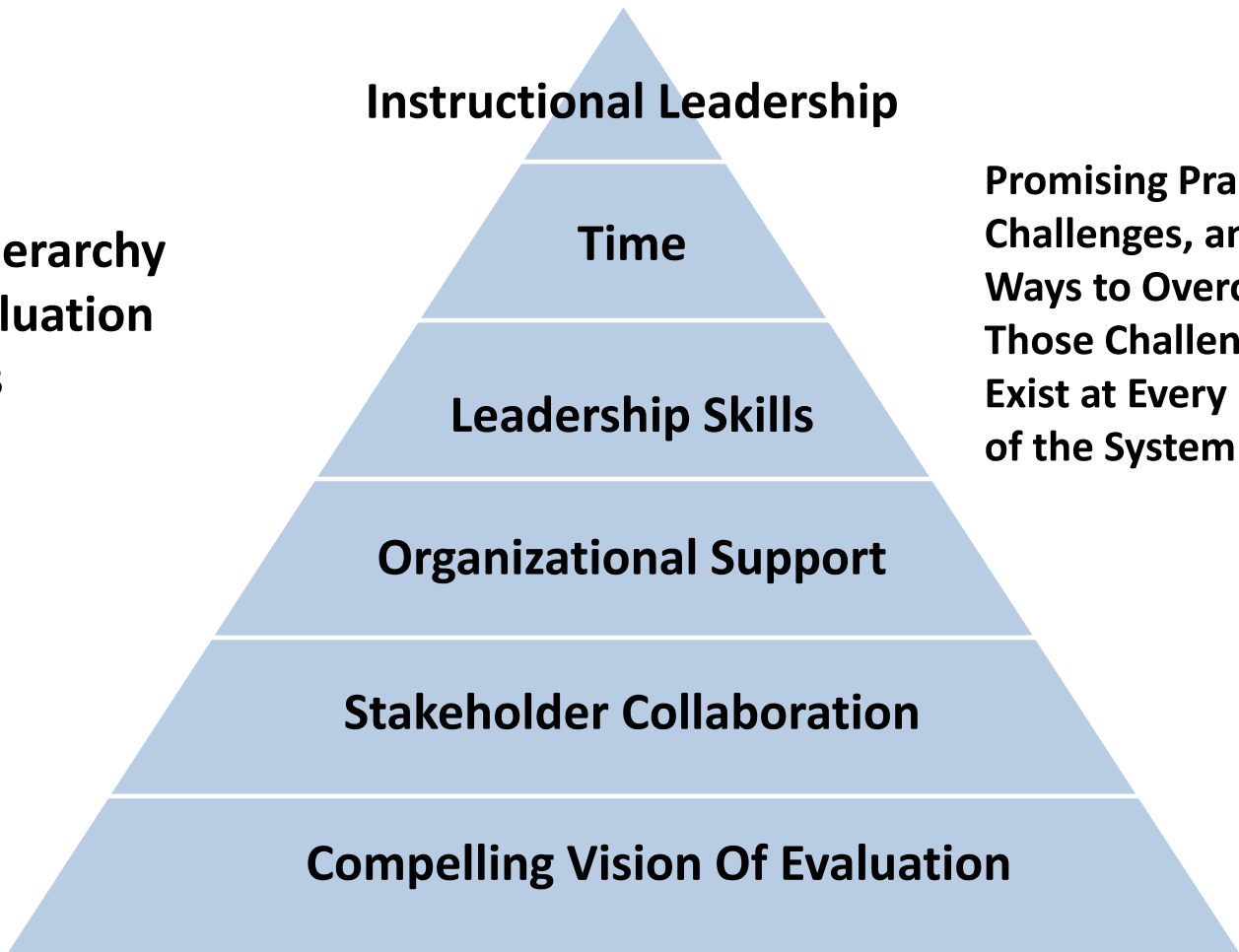
# Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC

- In January and February of 2012, we surveyed and interviewed:
  - District leaders in the six pipeline school districts
  - CCSSO surveyed 24 states in the State Consortium on Educator Effectiveness
  - NSIP surveyed principals at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual SAM's Conference
  - Delaware Academy For School Leadership
  - Representative on the NAESP and NASSP Committee on Principal Evaluation
- Our study focused a number of questions including:
  - What Was The Purpose of The Evaluation System?
  - What Components Were Included In The Evaluation System?
  - What Were The Implementation Timelines?
  - What Were Principals Supposed To Do?
  - What Kinds of Support Were Available?
  - What Challenges Did The Districts Face?
  - What Promising Practices Had Districts Developed?
  - What Advice Did Districts Have For Each Other?

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation

# The System Matters!

**PLC Hierarchy  
of Evaluation  
Needs**



**Promising Practices,  
Challenges, and  
Ways to Overcome  
Those Challenges  
Exist at Every Level  
of the System**

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation

# Lessons Learned From Districts: Working To Help Principals Evaluate Teachers

1. Develop A Compelling Vision Of What Good Evaluation Is And Why It Is Important
2. Establish Clear Communication And Strong Collaboration Among All Stakeholders
3. Ensure That Organizational Structures Of Schools, Districts, and States Support Principals
4. Develop and Implement Effective Ways To Strengthen Leadership Skills
5. Help Principals Manage Their Time Effectively

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation

# Lesson 1: Develop A Compelling Vision Of What Good Evaluation Is And Why It Is Important

- A common understanding of the purpose of the new evaluation system
- Clear focus on teacher and leader effectiveness and student growth
- Strong integration between teacher evaluation and teacher and leader professional development
- Use of multiple measures, including increased formative assessments
- Utilize tools that increase the time that principals spend assessing instruction and developing teachers
- Adapt state evaluation instruments to the context of each district
- Collect student artifacts and student data as part of the evaluation
- Work with teachers to identify practices and behaviors in the classroom that make a difference

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation

# Lesson 2: Establish Clear Communication And Strong Collaboration Among All Stakeholders

- Include everyone (teachers, principals, community) in the design of the evaluation system
- Take time to pilot, obtain feedback, and engage in continual improvement
- Keep feedback loops open between principals, teachers, district, and other stakeholders
- Increase state and district collaboration so that districts have the local flexibility to recognize context and encourage innovation
- Work with universities to develop instructional leadership skills in the pipeline for aspiring principals.

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation



# Lesson 4: Develop and Implement Effective Ways To Strengthen Leadership Skills

- Increase the effectiveness of principal coaches and supervisors
- Implement effective professional development for principals including strong learning communities and networks
- Provide on-going support rather than one-time training
- Develop common language of effective practices (shared framework and rubrics)
- Focus on calibration of observations so that there is strong inter-rater reliability across principals
- Ensure that principal coaches work with the principal in every stage of the evaluation, including providing teacher feedback
- For large school districts, train principals in small groups or networks
- Start small by focusing training on just a few indicators within the framework used to evaluate teachers

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation

**The Lessons We Are Learning  
From Our Experiences In Evaluating Teachers  
Can Help Us Think About  
The Challenges Of Evaluating Leaders**

# Lessons Yet To Come:

## How Do We Evaluate Principals?

- Develop A Compelling Vision Of What Good Evaluation Is And Why It Is Important
  - What is our theory of action?
  - How will we evaluate the intended and unintended consequences and impact of these efforts?
- Establish Clear Communication And Strong Collaboration Among All Stakeholders
  - How do we build trust?
  - How do we ensure that district, state, and federal policies are aligned?
- Develop and Implement Effective Ways To Strengthen Leadership Skills At Every Level Of The System
  - How do we help principals recognize effective teaching?
  - How do we help principals use data and time effectively?
  - How do we help those who evaluate principals recognize effective leadership?
  - How do we help those who evaluate principals use their data and time effectively?

# How We Know If New Approaches To Principal Evaluation Work?

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**By KEVIN ROBINSON-AVILA**  
Journal Staff Writer

Aerospace industry leaders  
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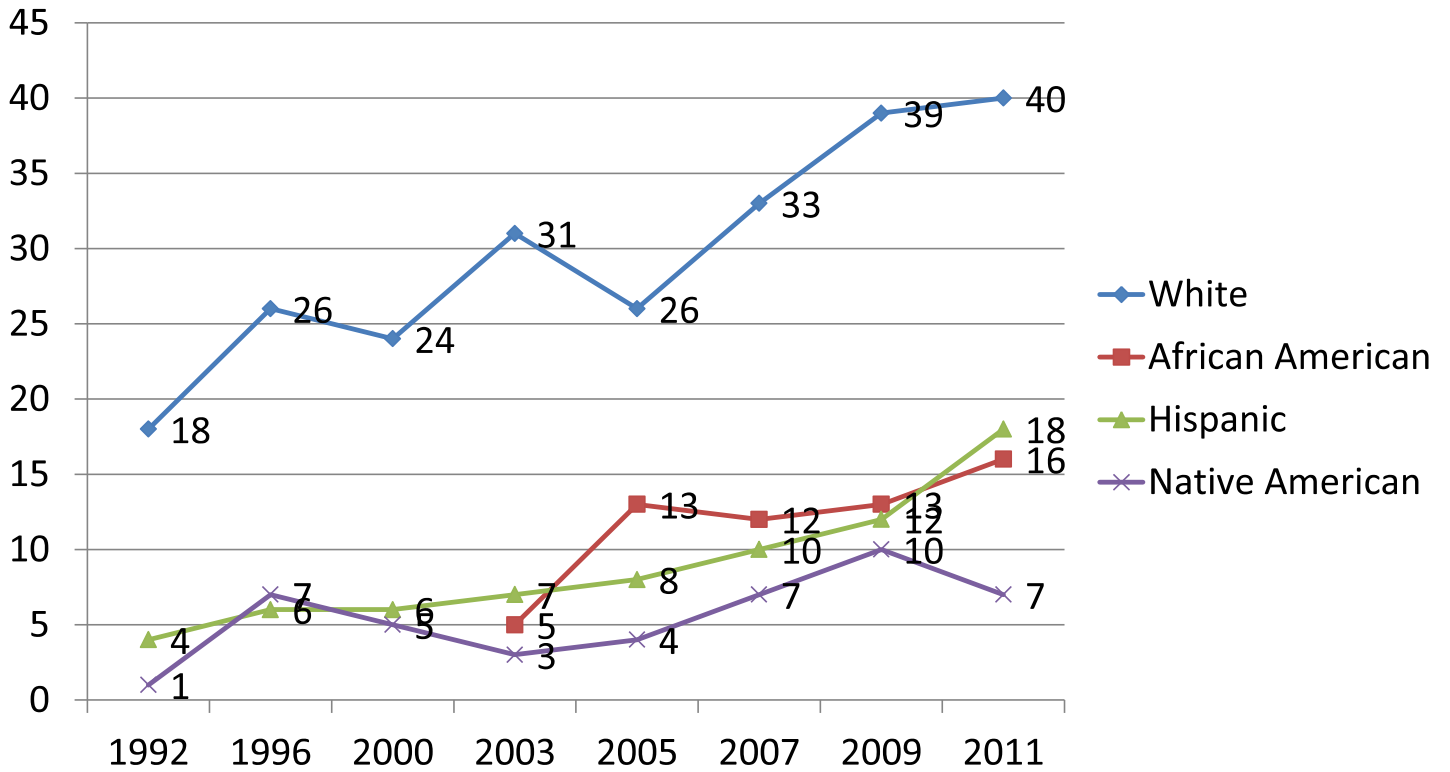
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**By HAILEY HEINZ**  
Journal Staff Writer

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# Percent of NM 8th Grade Students Scoring At or Above Proficient in Math By Ethnicity\* (NAEP 1992-2011)

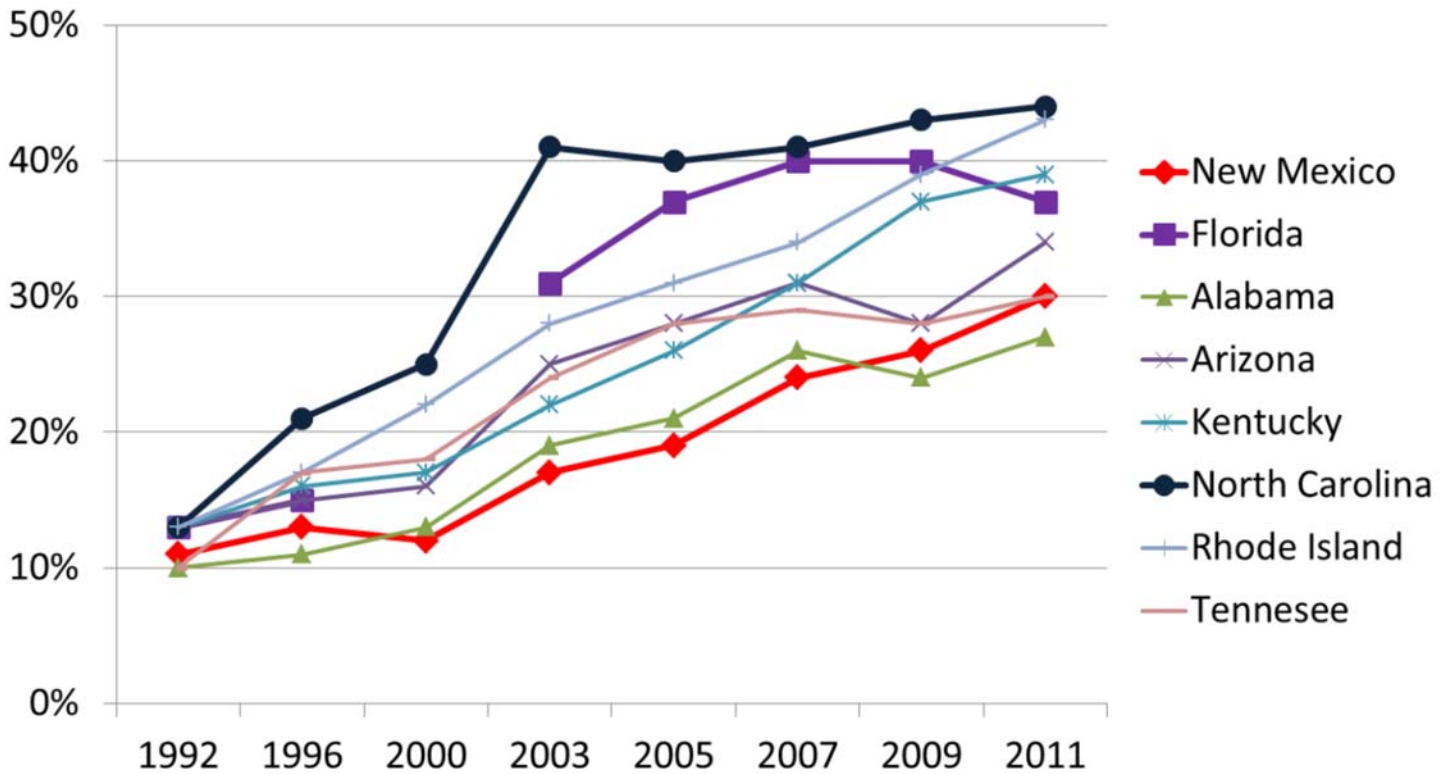


\*Asian/Pacific Islander is not reported because NAEP reporting standards have not been met.

African American data is not reported in all years because NAEP reporting standards have not been met.

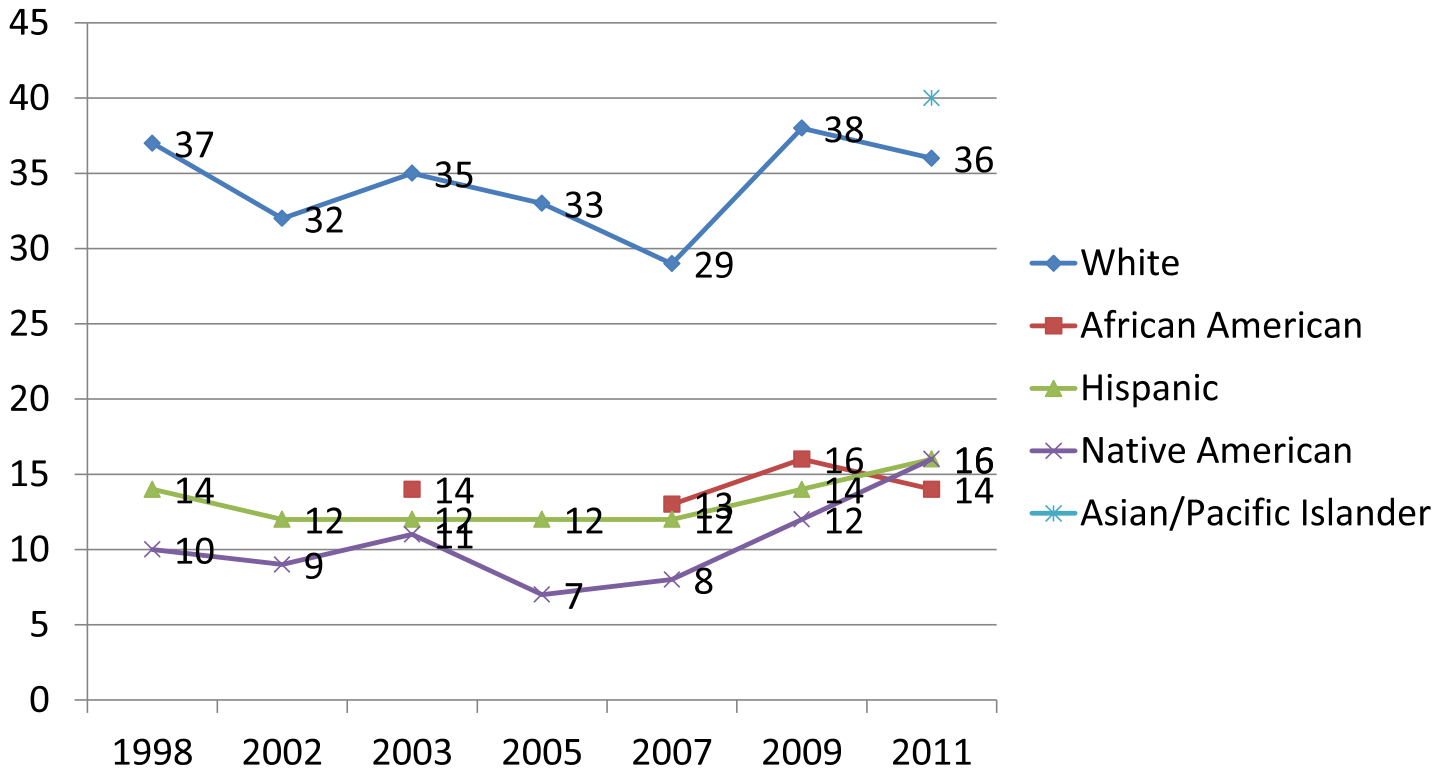
# Student Achievement Comparisons

## NAEP Grade 4 Math Students At or Above Proficiency



\*Florida data in the year 2000 was unavailable as of 11.11.11

# Percent of NM 8th Grade Students Scoring At or Above Proficient in Reading By Ethnicity\* (NAEP 1998-2011)

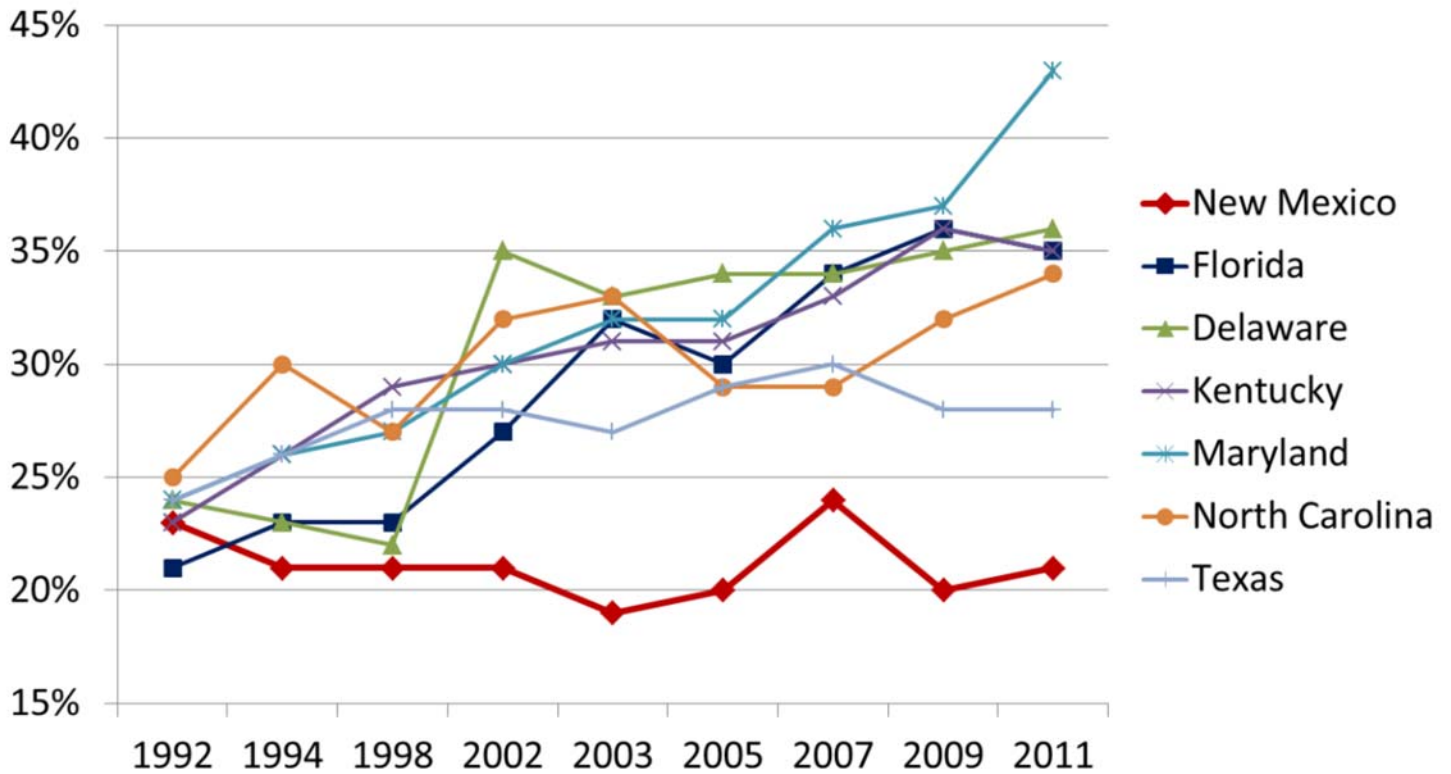


\*Asian/Pacific Islander is not reported in all years because NAEP reporting standards have not been met.

African American data is not reported in all years because NAEP reporting standards have not been met.

# Student Achievement Comparisons

## NAEP Grade 4 Reading Students At or Above Proficiency





# Voices of Experience

“Think about what’s going to have the most impact on teaching and learning... what is really going to get to the heart of what that teacher is doing every day in the classroom with students.” (School District Administrator)

"Do not rush this important process. Get input from teachers and principals and keep them posted and involved regularly. Pilot for a complete year with no consequences. Use the system for high stakes once validated with multiple years of performance data." (School District Administrator)

“Throughout, what we have done is reversed the way we’ve always done business.” (School District Administrator)

“You can’t fire your way to excellence, you have to develop it and our evaluation system lends itself to doing that.” (School District Administrator)

“We recognize the case load principals are facing to implement the new effectiveness system. The state will continue to engage our principals and district administrators to gather information to support the transition to the new system.” (State Agency Administrator)

Source: Leader and Teacher Evaluation PLC Background Report. Presented At The 2nd Convening Of The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative, Gwinnett County, GA. (March 18-19, 2012). The Wallace Foundation

# Voices of Experience

“People who design systems and people who do the work don’t speak the same language and being able to understand how we can get to a place where what practitioners are saying matters to them and is reflected in the system that they see has been more of a challenge than we initially thought.”

(School District Administrator)

“We are in a position where we are using an instrument that was developed FOR us and our hands are tied.”

(School District Administrator)

“They (principals) can’t have someone else talking to parents about big issues and I’m not talking about issues that the APs can handle. They don’t want to give up many of the managerial functions of the school because...the managerial part is something that is completely important and they can’t ignore. This is something we will need to keep doing some brainstorming on to come up with something that really will help our principals.”

(School District Administrator)

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# Voices of Experience

“There are many stakeholders to the teacher’s performance and they all have their own perspective and they all have their own expectations of what that looks like. And, if we’re not incorporating all of those then I think we’re missing the whole picture of the teacher’s effectiveness.”

(School District Administrator)

“Everyone with a stake in educating children should be involved in every phase of the evaluation process. Engage everyone!”

(School District Administrator)

“...the strengths include a grassroots effort involving teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, and education partners coming together to establish guiding principles, common language and understanding, as well as collective agreement on the purpose and intent of the effectiveness system.” (State Agency Administrator)

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# Voices of Experience

“One thing that completely benefited our district is that we have a great relationship with our unions and teachers. They were involved from the very, very beginning. You have to make this something you’re doing WITH teachers, not TO teachers.”  
(School District Administrator)

“When the new evaluation instrument was introduced, ..(we) invested time in supporting principals throughout the process by having regularly scheduled sessions to answer questions, share successes and to discuss any challenges. We also ensured that our HR staff was very acquainted with the evaluation instrument so they could provide any technical support to our principals.” (School District Administrator)

“Talent coaches play an interesting role...it’s been very helpful. It’s a hard role. It’s difficult role because they’re not necessarily welcomed. It’s been hard to find the people and we’ve had to deal with the consequence of potentially pulling very good principals out of schools and asking whether or not their new role as a Talent Coach allows them to serve more kids than they would if they were a high-performing principal. It’s hard to go to scale. There’s just no way we could afford it...Our greatest challenge has been how are we going to do this to scale.”  
(School District Administrator)

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# Voices of Experience

“We do have these trainings, but we are uncovering evidence that they are insufficient for doing the job to the degree that we want to do it.” (School District Administrator)

“The part that principals have said takes the most amount of time is actually coming up with the summary form of the observation, because we are giving teachers feedback on areas of strength, areas for focus, and then next steps where they can improve. Hands-down principals will say ‘that’s the part that is the most time consuming’ because they want to be very thoughtful about what feedback they give to teachers.” (School District Administrator)

“Seeing that it’s so overwhelming, how can we work backwards and make sure our training programs align with what we’re asking principals to do. So, we’re not starting fresh with the principals when they enter the job, but that they enter with some of these skills that we’re finding it difficult to create over-night.” (School District Administrator)

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# Voices of Experience

“What I would like to learn from other districts is how are they [the districts] measuring growth in student achievement for those [teachers in] non-tested subjects. A concern that we have... is the validity of the assessments. If we're going to use these teacher assessments for high-stakes... then these measures that we use for all of our teachers need to be valid assessments.”  
(School District Administrator)

“A big challenge that we face is our ambitious timeline, developing all this in time to pilot this January. There are still some components that are still not developed such as the growth in student achievement. They just selected in December the VAM and student growth percentile and our teachers don't understand that part because they haven't been educated on the value-added component.”  
(School District Administrator)

“We could potentially have principals and schools that are not performing continue through the next year and we wouldn't know that until those student achievement results come back in late spring or early summer.”  
(School District Administrator)

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# Voices of Experience

“I think that school systems need to be very clear about what they expect principals to do and if it’s to evaluate and lead instruction in the schoolhouse then that’s what they need to do. And these other administrative responsibilities should be placed in other hands. If districts decide that, no, administration and management of the schoolhouse is the primary responsibility, then I think they should take the evaluation of the teachers as instructors off the plate of the principals.” (School District Administrator)

“We’re seeing that the [feasible] ratio for the principal or the AP (Assistant Principals) [to evaluate teachers] is about 1:17.”  
(School District Administrator)

“We have data coming out of our ears. But we’ve developed a huge new online platform where everyone enters all their observation data. Obviously any system is only as good as the people inputting the data.”  
(School District Administrator)

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# Voices of Experience

“It is important to invest heavily in principal professional development in the evaluation of teachers.” (School District Administrator)

“VAM is new and teachers don’t know it. The more communication, the better. Keep principals and teachers informed and include them throughout the process.” (School District Administrator)

“20 indicators is too much. Look for 2 indicators on the rubric and implement them well. Start small and grow.” (School District Administrator)

“Feedback loops and professional development for teachers is also critical. Important to have budgetary structures that encourage principals to restructure school staffing in ways that ensure they have time available to evaluate teachers and provide instructional leadership.” (School District Administrator)

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