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Report Calls For Standardized Teacher Evaluation

A much-anticipated report being released Wednesday calls for a new standardized system of evaluating teachers statewide, one that would allow a number of in-classroom evaluations using a single method and assessing teacher skills based both on their practice and student improvement.

The proposal was developed and is being released by the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness, a group formed by [Governor Rick Snyder](#) and the Legislature in 2011, and was cited by the group's chair as providing for the "best possible outcomes for students, educators and ultimately for Michigan." It is an essential component to the teacher tenure changes enacted in 2011.

The basic element of the plan would call for increased in-classroom evaluations of a teacher's performance, then assessing whether that teacher met one of three ranks - professional, provisional or ineffective - based on both the teacher's actual classroom performance and the students' outcome using data tracking their growth.

To date, teacher evaluations have not considered student improvement.

In effect, the report proposes that teachers continuously ranked as less than professional would eventually leave the profession.

The report said that teachers ranked as provisional need to show significant improvement, and if they are ranked as provisional or below for three consecutive years, they should be counseled out of the profession.

A teacher ranked as ineffective for two consecutive years should be fired, the report said, at least from his or her current school.

Even teachers ranked as professional should have improvement goals, the report said.

"Every child in Michigan deserves skillful teachers, not just some of the time, but each and every year," said Deborah Loewenberg Ball, chair of the commission and dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan. She also said that, "Every teacher deserves the opportunity to develop and continue to refine his or her professional skill."

A "fair, transparent and rigorous teacher evaluation system can help transform the culture of the teaching profession and benefit the state's 1.5 million school children," she said.

She also insisted the program is aimed at student and instructional improvement, not at being punitive.

For example, the plan would not tie teacher pay to their performance evaluation, unlike systems used in states

like Indiana and Colorado. At present, there is not enough data to show tying performance to pay should be included, Ms. Ball said.

The proposal would have all school districts and charter schools use the evaluation system by the 2015-2016 school year.

For the proposal to take effect, however, it would have to be approved by the Legislature. Legislative hearings on the findings and proposals could begin yet this summer.

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