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# Teacher Professional Evaluation and Professional Growth Systems in Maine: 2014 Report

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*Prepared by:*

*Craig A. Mason, Ph.D.*

*Michael Porter, M.S.*

*June 2014*

Maine Education Policy Research Institute  
College of Education & Human Development  
University of Maine  
Orono, Maine



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Craig A. Mason, Ph.D.  
Professor of Education and Applied Quantitative Methods

Michael Porter, M.S.  
Research Associate

**Maine Education Policy Research Institute**  
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Center for Research and Evaluation  
College of Education and Human Development  
University of Maine, 5766 Shibles Hall, Orono, Maine 04469-5766  
(207) 581-2475



*A Member of the University of Maine System*

## **AUTHORS BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**Craig A. Mason, Ph.D.**, is a Professor of Education and Applied Quantitative Methods at the University of Maine, where he also serves as the Director of the Center for Research and Evaluation and Co-Director of the Maine Education Policy Research Institute. For the past decade, Dr. Mason has also served as a methodological consultant to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Mason received his PhD in Clinical Child Psychology from the University of Washington, and his research interests are in developmental growth models, parent-child relationships, informatics, and research methodology. He has over 80 publications, and has been principal investigator or co-principal investigator on over \$10 million in grants.

**Michael Porter, M.S.**, is a Research Associate for the Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine. He has been involved with education and science outreach for fifteen years and earned five degrees from Florida State University. He has taught assorted subjects from high school to graduate school and has worked closely with K-12 teachers during professional development workshops and through extended research projects. He has a broad background in many natural sciences and specialized training in analyzing and communicating real-time earth science data. Michael is excited to be an advocate for scientific knowledge and thinking to any audience: teachers, students, policymakers, or the general public

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the Maine State Legislature, the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) conducted a study to assess the development of teacher performance evaluation / professional growth (PE/PG) systems in Maine. This report summarizes the findings from two surveys of Maine superintendents conducted in May 2013 (73 districts represented) and May 2014 (76 districts represented). The report focuses on data from May 2014 and includes an examination of changes in attitudes and concerns over the last year.

Superintendents reported on a number of areas related to PE/PG systems. Respondents were also provided an opportunity to include narrative comments regarding their views and experience. Topics addressed include *Beliefs Regarding Teacher Evaluation, Characteristics of PE/PG Systems, Anticipated Pilot and Implementation Dates for PE/PG Systems, and Possible Areas for Assistance*. A summary of these topics, including related concerns and considerations noted by respondents, is presented below.

***Beliefs Regarding Teacher Evaluation.*** Maine superintendents uniformly reported believing that teacher effectiveness impacts student achievement, and that instruction can be accurately evaluated and such evaluations can be used to inform professional development. However, while there was also strong agreement that student achievement and academic growth can be validly measured, there was less support – although still a majority of superintendents – for the belief that teacher evaluation should be linked to student growth, or that a teacher’s merit compensation should be tied to his or her PE/PG results. Superintendents also reported mixed expectations regarding the impact that Maine’s teacher-effectiveness laws would ultimately have on teaching and learning in the classroom.

***Characteristics of their PE/PG System.*** Reflecting Maine’s orientation to local control, districts throughout the state select their own standards framework for their PE/PG systems. Nevertheless, superintendents for nearly half of the participating districts focused on the same framework (Marzano). The remaining districts use a variety of frameworks, including InTASC, Danielson, NBTS, and Marshall; or they have chosen not to base their PE/PG system on a formal standards framework. This district-to-district variability was viewed as both a strength and

limitation by superintendents. A single statewide standards framework was seen as a way of potentially optimizing resources, facilitating shared discussion, and pooling training opportunities throughout the state. However, local-selection of a standards framework allows districts to design a system that reflects their own unique strengths and perspectives.

A second fundamental characteristic of PE/PG systems in Maine involves the tools and methods used to assess student growth. Not surprisingly, this is an area of considerable concern, with superintendents rating the analysis and interpretation of student growth data as their single greatest concern out of a list of possible issues. Specifically, over half of the participating superintendents reported being “extremely concerned” about the analysis and interpretation of student growth data, with three-fourths of indicating that additional assistance with growth measures would be useful to their districts.

***Anticipated Pilot and Implementation Dates.*** A key question underlying this report is whether districts are on target to meet the State requirements of (1) piloting PE/PG systems during the 2014-2015 school year, and (2) implementing PE/PG systems during the 2015-2016 school year. Superintendents for nearly one-third of responding districts indicated that they may not be able to pilot their PE/PG system until at least the 2015-2016 school year, and may not be able to implement their system until the 2016-2017 school year or later. At a minimum, this would reflect a one-year delay beyond the deadlines established by the State.

Consequently, it is not surprising that nearly half of these superintendents indicated that the required deadlines were extremely concerning and additional time would be very useful. This view was not limited to districts that were at-risk of missing implementation deadlines. For example, several superintendents expressed support for Maine’s PE/PG efforts, yet noted that additional time would help all districts develop high quality, effective and accurate systems. Furthermore, superintendents suggested that additional time may be particularly valuable for smaller districts and/or districts with more limited resources and staffing.

***Possible Areas for Assistance.*** Finally, in addition to those already noted, the survey also identified a number of ways in which superintendents felt that the state and education partners might facilitate the development and implementation of PE/PG systems in Maine. First, several superintendents reported that an expanded library of templates and illustrative models for

instruments and methods would be valuable. For example, the Maine Department of Education might serve as a nexus for PE/PG resources developed by districts, facilitating the sharing of tools, resources, and experiences among Maine schools. In addition, expanded support for professional development opportunities addressing effective pedagogy, evaluation, and student growth was also widely seen as a valuable way to help districts. Lastly, a number of superintendents reported that additional guidance from the State regarding the “nuts and bolts” of evaluation tools and effectiveness measures would also be valuable (e.g., how to determine appropriate weights, how to combine multiple competing measures).

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# INTRODUCTION

## RECENT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ACTIVITY

In April 2012, LD1858 was signed into law, setting Maine on a path to develop comprehensive teacher performance evaluation / professional growth (PE/PG) systems, with the goal of enhancing educator effectiveness and student learning and achievement in Maine. Based on this law, by the end of the 2013-2014 academic year each school administrative unit in Maine was to develop a PE/PG system through the collaborative work of teachers, principals, administrators, school board members, parents and other members of the public. These systems are then to be piloted during the 2014-2015 academic year, with the results used to further refine systems prior to their being fully implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year.

LD1858 also chartered the Maine Educator Effectiveness Council, a 16 member body comprised of various educational stakeholders tasked with drafting the PE/PG rules for Maine. The council delivered recommendations to the legislature in March, 2013; however, following debate in the legislature, the process was revisited and further rule-making activity and discussion occurred. During the second round of rule-making student, growth measures and the relative weight of student growth on the evaluation process were particular areas of focus. The result of this activity was LD 1747, which was passed by both chambers of the legislature on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

LD 1747 differed from the original proposal and rules in three major respects. First, language was dropped regarding any official percentage requirement for student growth measures to be included in teacher evaluation scores; second, the district process for PE/PG development was defined to include teachers as the majority of stakeholders; and third, while assessments should be consistent with the standards of professional practice adopted by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), they need not be 'valid and reliable'. In striking down the proposed requirement of a defined minimum student growth component in an educator's evaluation score, the legislature nevertheless noted that student

growth measures should still be a significant part of these scores, but allowed that the determination of how large it must be to be ‘significant’ rests at the local level.

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Governor vetoed this legislation, with a preference for an earlier model proposed by the Department. In response, the Maine House and Senate overrode the governor’s veto on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, codifying their revision. Presently, MDOE is tasked with developing a model PE/PG system (incorporating 20% student growth measures) by July 2014 for district stakeholder groups to consider when crafting their PE/PG plans. Districts are still required to pilot their systems during the coming 2014-2015 school year and should gather data on as many of their student growth measures as possible. By June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, each district must have their PE/PG system approved by MDOE, or they will need to implement the MDOE model PE/PG plan.

## **THIS REPORT**

At the request of the Maine State Legislature, the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) conducted a study to assess the status of the development of teacher performance evaluation / professional growth systems in Maine. This report summarizes the findings from two surveys of Maine superintendents conducted at the end of the 2012-2013 school year and the 2013-2014 school year, with a focus on the more recent data and changes in respondent attitudes and concerns over the last year.

The report is organized around the following headings:

- ***Beliefs Regarding Teacher Evaluation:*** Superintendent reports on their views regarding teacher evaluation and related concepts, such as measurement of student growth and the use and impact of evaluation data.
- ***Anticipated Pilot and Implementation Dates:*** Estimates of when superintendents anticipate piloting and implementing PE/PG systems.
- ***Snapshot of Model Characteristics:*** A brief tally of the various standards and type of data being used in Maine PE/PG systems.
- ***Factors Influencing Decisions Regarding PE/PG Systems:*** A summary of the relative impact that factors such as cost, support, and reliability, have on decisions regarding the choice and development of PE/PG systems.
- ***Concerns Regarding PE/PG Systems:*** An assessment of various concerns regarding the development, implementation, and use of a PE/PG system, including resources, support, and implementation timelines.

- ***Possible Areas for Assistance:*** A summary of possible ways in which the Department of Education, Maine Legislature, and other partners can assist districts through this process.

## **METHODS**

At the end of the 2012-2013 school year and again at the end of the 2013-2014 school year, MEPRI conducted online surveys of superintendents in Maine assessing their development of performance evaluation / professional growth systems. Reminders were emailed to non-respondents in order to further increase participation rates, noting the importance of this topic for districts and the state. Surveys were addressed to superintendents, although in a few cases, a superintendent asked a designee knowledgeable of these matters to complete the survey for their district.

Final results were obtained for 73 school districts in May 2013 and 76 school districts in May 2014. Forty-four districts responded to both surveys and were included in a subset of analyses examining how impressions, opinions, and concerns have changed (among this group) over the last year.

## **FINDINGS**

### **BELIEFS REGARDING TEACHER EVALUATION**

In order to understand the current status of PE/PG development and implementation across Maine, this report begins by examining the current views and beliefs that district superintendents hold regarding teacher effectiveness, student achievement and growth, and the use of PE/PG.

#### **Current Views**

As summarized in Table 1, Maine superintendents believe that teacher effectiveness is both important and measurable; however, there are varying degrees of a consensus regarding specific aspects of how teacher effectiveness can and should be used in Maine. Nearly all respondents (95%) strongly agreed that teacher effectiveness impacts student achievement. Furthermore, 84% agreed or strongly agreed with the view that instruction can be accurately evaluated and

judged, with a similar percentage (87%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that an effective evaluation system could inform professional development.

**Table 1.** Superintendent Beliefs Regarding Teacher Evaluation (2014)

Beliefs about evaluation	(1) Strongly Disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Somewhat Disagree	(4) Neither Agree nor Disagree	(5) Somewhat Agree	(6) Agree	(7) Strongly Agree	Mean	N
Teacher Effectiveness Impacts Student Achievement	-	-	-	-	-	5%	95%	6.95	76
Student Achievement can be Measured in a Valid Way	-	1%	1%	-	9%	57%	32%	6.13	76
Student Academic Growth can be Measured in a Valid Way	-	1%	1%	1%	22%	51%	22%	5.88	76
Teacher Evaluation Should be Linked to Student Academic Growth	1%	1%	4%	5%	24%	46%	18%	5.61	76
Instruction can be Accurately Evaluated and Judged	-	-	1%	-	14%	51%	33%	6.14	76
Teacher Evaluation Should be Tied to Merit Compensation	4%	8%	5%	20%	33%	21%	9%	4.70	76
An Effective Evaluation System Informs Professional Development	-	-	-	3%	9%	32%	55%	6.41	74
Maine Laws, Rules, and Regulations Regarding Teacher Evaluation will Result in Improved Teaching and Learning	3%	13%	5%	20%	25%	22%	12%	4.66	76

While there was also strong agreement that student achievement and academic growth can be validly measured (agree/strongly agree: 89% and 73%, respectively), there was less support – although still a majority – that teacher evaluation should be linked to student growth (64% agree/strongly agree). Only 30% agreed or strongly agreed with tying merit compensation to teacher evaluation, with more than one third (37%) either neutral or not supportive of such a connection. To quote a comment provided by one superintendent:

“Student performance data should not be used in teacher evaluations. The tests used to measure student performance were never designed to assess teacher performance. They were only designed to measure student performance. The legislature should consider an

accountability system that separates student performance from teacher performance but holds the district and school accountable for student performance. “

This superintendent felt that student performance was an important outcome to be reported and evaluated, but was best conceptualized as an outcome at the district or school-level, rather than for individual teachers.

Finally, superintendents reported mixed expectations regarding the ultimate impact that Maine teacher-effectiveness laws and rules would have on teaching and learning, with one third (34%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that new rules would lead to improvement while two of five (41%) either being neutral or negative regarding long-term impacts. This range of views was reflected in superintendent comments:

“I support the concept behind this legislation and identifying a meaningful and fair manner of incorporating student achievement data into the system. Additional support in terms of system development and training will be necessary for many districts.”

“I think it will lead to improved teaching and learning. Student achievement will be positively impacted.”

“I question the research associating merit pay to increased student achievement. I question the amount of time this will take. I question the usefulness or purpose of reducing teacher evaluation to a score. I question how teachers can all be equally included as teachers of record. I question the reliability and validity of SLOs. I believe that improved teacher evaluation will result in improved student achievement only if teachers are treated as professionals, are held responsible for explaining their data (not judged by it) and the process is collaborative, involves coaching and about improvement not judgment and shame. Morale in Maine's small schools [is] going to be adversely affected and it is unlikely that student achievement gains will result. Collective accountability for student growth makes sense; blame and shame does not. Yes, teachers need more and better feedback. Yes, current systems are inadequate. But I fear the state is going in the wrong direction with this one, both in the case of students and teachers. We are taking about people, not widgets.”

## Change Over Previous 12 Months

When year-to-year reports were compared among the 44 respondents who completed both the 2013 and 2014 survey, analyses found a *decrease* in support for two of these views<sup>1</sup>. First, superintendents reported slightly lower levels of agreement with the belief that student academic growth can be measured in a valid way ( $t(42) = -2.99, p = .005$ ), reflecting a decrease in their mean score from 6.19 to 5.67. Second, respondents answering both years also reported a decrease in their belief that an effective teacher evaluation system informs professional development ( $t(41) = -2.96, p = .005$ ), reflecting a decline from 6.76 to 6.29 (although it should be noted that this is still particularly highly rated).

## ANTICIPATED PILOT AND IMPLEMENTATION DATES

Given this support, paired with some concerns, the natural question is to what degree are districts on target to meet the State deadlines for piloting and implementing PE/PG systems.

### Timeframes for Piloting PE/PG Systems

As presented in Table 2, nearly one-sixth of districts responding to the survey indicated that they have already piloted their PE/PG system, and over half (53%) of the remaining districts anticipate piloting their system during the 2014-2015 academic year. This would be on schedule with state law, which requires that systems be piloted in 2014-2015. Nevertheless, nearly one-third of responding districts indicated that they will not be piloting their system until at least the 2015-2016 academic year, with 5% indicating that the earliest they anticipate piloting their system will be during the 2016-2017 academic year. As noted by one superintendent:

“We have been working to comply with the timeline, however we still have a great deal of planning to do and I am not sure if we will make the deadline, especially now with the need to formally vote on the members of the committee. That will take additional time and if the members of the group change, it will take some time to educate those new members. I realize the value of a good system and am not willing to sacrifice the quality of the system for adherence to a timeline for a system that hasn't been finalized until very recently.”

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<sup>1</sup> Note that given the number of comparisons, a threshold cut-off of  $p < .01$  was used to identify significant differences.

**Table 2.** Superintendent Reports of Anticipated Dates at which Systems will be Piloted (2014)

<b>Anticipated Date for Piloting System</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>
System has Already Been Piloted	16%	12
2014-2015 Academic Year (First Half)	32%	24
2014-2015 Academic Year (Second Half)	21%	16
2015-2016 Academic Year (First Half)	25%	19
2015-2016 Academic Year (Second Half)	1%	1
2016-2017 Academic Year or Later	5%	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>

### **Timeframes for Implementing PE/PG Systems**

As summarized in Table 3, 8% of reporting districts indicated that they have either already implemented their PE/PG system, or anticipate doing so during the 2014/2015 academic year. This would place these districts ahead of schedule based on state law, which requires that systems be implemented in the 2015-2016 academic year. Superintendents for the majority of remaining districts (60.5%) indicated that they plan to implement their system on time during the 2015-2016 academic year. Nevertheless, reflecting delays in piloting systems, superintendents for nearly one-third of responding districts (32%) indicated that they do not anticipate implementing their PE/PG system until at least the 2016-2017 academic year, with 8% indicating that the earliest they anticipate implementing their system will be the 2017-2018 academic year.

**Table 3.** Superintendent Reports of Anticipated Dates at which Systems will be Implemented (2014)

<b>Anticipated Date for Implementing System</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>
System has Already Been Implemented	4%	3
2014-2015 Academic Year	4%	3
2015-2016 Academic Year	61%	46
2016-2017 Academic Year or Later	24%	18
2017-2018 Academic Year or Later	8%	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>

### SNAPSHOT OF MODEL CHARACTERISTICS

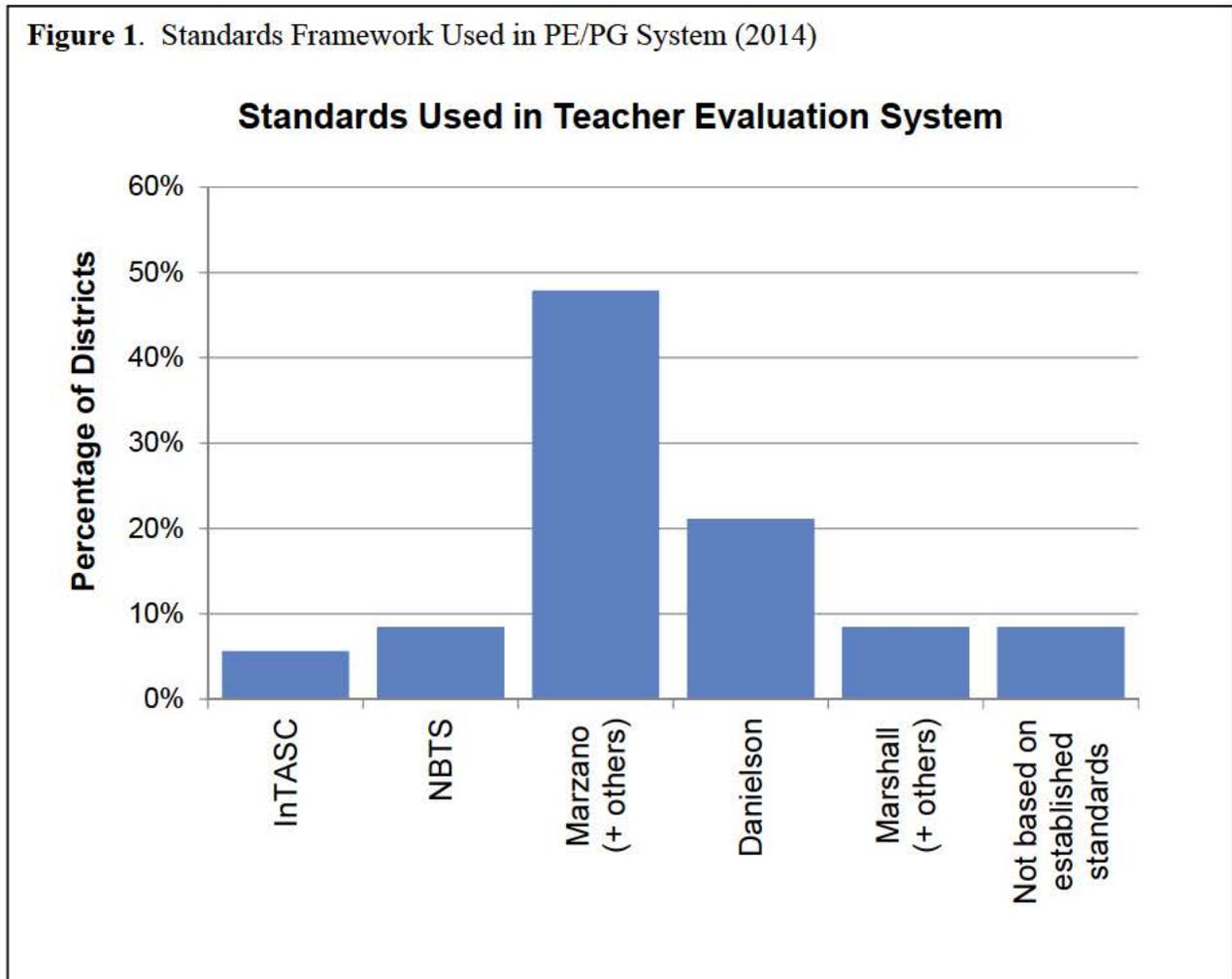
In addition to superintendent beliefs and anticipated implementation schedules, some background on the fundamental design characteristics of current and planned PE/PG systems may be helpful in understanding the priorities and concerns that districts report as they move forward.

#### Standards Framework

As discussed in more detail later in this report, training in various professional development and evaluation models can potentially be demanding and costly. The survey therefore assessed the specific standards framework being used by districts as a resource for future professional development planning and coordination. As illustrated in Figure 1, Marzano was the most widely used standards framework among responding districts, with nearly half (48%) using Marzano or Marzano supplemented with other systems. Danielson was used by 21% of responding districts, with less than 10% of districts basing their systems on InTASC, MBTS, or

Marshall frameworks. Eight percent of districts reported that their system is currently not based on a formally established set of standards.

**Figure 1.** Standards Framework Used in PE/PG System (2014)



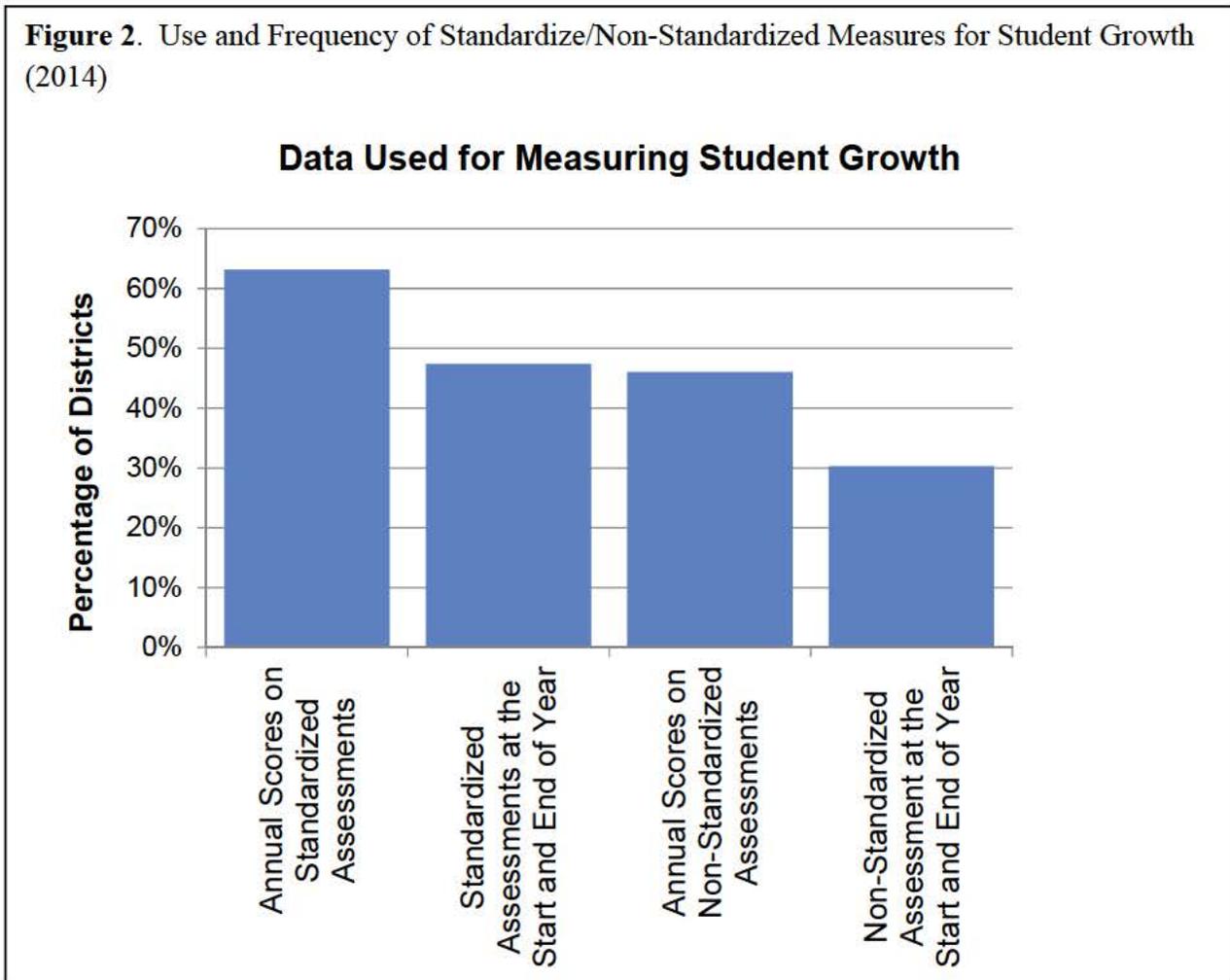
Superintendents viewed the district-to-district variation in standards as both a limitation and strength. As one noted:

“I support a teacher evaluation system that uses student performance data to assess merit. I believe the models being developed by [contractor name removed] are very helpful. Some uniformity in evaluation criteria and process across the state enables collaboration in implementation, consistency in expectations and a more standard view of teacher effectiveness for hiring purposes as teachers move from district to district. That being said, changing and establishing a new teacher evaluation system is a process that requires considerable commitment to communication, staff development, time and money. With regard to these, each school system has a different level of capacity which must be taken into consideration.”

## Nature of Data Used in Student Growth Models

In addition to a standards framework, a second fundamental characteristic of PE/PG systems in Maine is the method and tools used to measure student growth. Therefore, the survey also assessed the degree to which districts used standardized and non-standardized instruments, as well as the frequency of assessments, in order to measure student growth over time. Results are summarized in Figure 2. Note that districts may use multiple measures on multiple schedules, hence the total frequencies add to more than 100%.

**Figure 2.** Use and Frequency of Standardize/Non-Standardized Measures for Student Growth (2014)



Not surprisingly, standardized measures administered once per year were used as a component in growth models by nearly two-thirds of districts, with nearly half (46%) using non-standardized measures once per year. Nearly half of all districts (47%) also reported using standardized

measures at both the start and end of a school year as a way of assessing student growth, while 30% of districts reported doing so with non-standardized measures.

While standardized assessments that are already being administered present a readily available resource, some superintendents noted the controversy and concerns regarding using these as measures of teaching effectiveness.

“The biggest issue for us is what to use for a measure of student growth. We currently use NWEA, however, NWEA continues to stress that their assessment is not intended for use to measure teacher performance.”

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS REGARDING PE/PG SYSTEM**

Beyond these general features, districts report considering a variety of factors when choosing and developing a PE/PG system.

### **Current Views**

As reflected in Table 4, superintendents reported that there are many factors which have a strong influence on their selection of a PE/PG system. Of the ten factors queried, eight were considered by a majority of superintendents to have a major impact on PE/PG system selection and development. The reliability and relevance of a system in improving teacher effectiveness received the highest overall rating, with three quarters of superintendents saying that this has a major effect on system development. This was followed closely by the reliability and relevance of the system to judge teacher effectiveness. While teacher support for the adoption of the system was one of two areas not rated as having a major effect by more than half of the respondents, nearly all (97%) rated it as having at least a moderate effect.

The cost of the system received the lowest relative ratings, with one-in-seven indicating cost had a minor or no effect, although the balance still indicated cost played a moderate or major role. In part, some districts are not yet at a point where they can fully estimate the ultimate cost of a PE/PG system:

“I have no idea how much a new system will cost... More time is definitely needed before piloting and implementing.”

**Table 4.** Superintendent Reports of Factors Influencing Their Selection of a PE/PG System (2014)

Factors Influencing Selection of System	1. No Effect	2. Minor Effect	3. Moderate Effect	4. Major Effect	Mean	N
Sufficient Support for System Development and Adoption	1%	11%	34%	54%	3.41	76
Teacher Support for the Adoption of the System	-	3%	54%	43%	3.41	76
Sufficient Availability of Training for Implementation	-	3%	47%	50%	3.47	76
Transparency of Evaluation Processes	1%	1%	32%	66%	3.62	76
Ease of Use	-	1%	36%	63%	3.62	76
Cost of the System	3%	11%	46%	41%	3.25	76
Reliability and Relevance of the System to Improve Student Achievement	-	4%	29%	67%	3.63	75
Reliability and Relevance of the System to Judge Teacher Effectiveness	-	-	28%	72%	3.72	75
Reliability and Relevance of the System to Improve Teacher Effectiveness	-	1%	24%	75%	3.73	75
Flexibility and Adaptability	-	4%	35%	61%	3.57	75

### Change Over Previous 12 Months

When year-to-year reports were compared among the 44 respondents who completed both the 2013 and 2014 surveys, analyses found only one area in which ratings of the relative importance of these factors changed: Cost of the system. Among superintendents who responded both years, cost was seen as having less of an impact on system development choices in May 2014, versus

May 2013 ( $t(42) = -2.87, p = .006$ ). This reflected a decrease in mean scores from 3.67 to 3.28 among those respondents who completed the survey both years.

## **CONCERNS REGARDING PE/PG SYSTEMS**

Not surprisingly, given the complexity, sensitivity, and urgency of developing PE/PG systems, districts noted a number of concerns as they advance towards implementation.

### **Current Views**

As summarized in Table 5, superintendents identified several areas where they have significant concerns regarding the availability of resources or help with PE/PG systems. The topic with the highest overall level of concern was the analysis and interpretation of student growth data. Over half of respondents reported being “extremely concerned” with being able to analyze and properly interpret student growth data, while over three-fourths were at a minimum “very concerned”. As noted by one superintendent, the process of using this data can be demanding:

“Thank you for conducting the survey. I believe that the key to effective evaluation is use of common language and standards, with a focus on "inter-rater" reliability in gathering and analyzing evidence of effective practice in the classroom. Adding "student growth" to the rating is also very important; however, this component must be done thoughtfully, with an eye toward accurately and fairly describing a teacher's propensity to assist students in growth over time. It may not be possible in all cases to fairly rate teachers in this area on an annual basis. Some degree of flexibility should be built in for administrators to track this over time in order to characterize a rating. Very small instructional groups, lack of student attendance, among other factors, affect these ratings. The SLO process does hold great promise for doing this, but it needs further refinement.”

Resources for increased compensation tied to the evaluation process was the second highest rated area of concern, also with over half of respondents “extremely concerned” with having resources available for compensation, and nearly three-fourths at least “very concerned” about being able to provide increased compensation.

The implementation timeline was extremely concerning to nearly half of superintendents (47%), as was receiving guidance concerning the new law (47%).

**Table 5.** Superintendent Concerns Regarding Teacher Evaluation (2014)

Concerns	1. No at all Concerned	2. Slightly Concerned	3. Somewhat Concerned	4. Very Concerned	5. Extremely Concerned	Mean	N
Resources to Conduct Classroom Observations	3%	12%	22%	34%	29%	3.75	76
Resources to Collect Student Performance Data	-	8%	29%	27%	36%	3.91	75
Resources to Provide Training for Evaluators	3%	8%	24%	31%	35%	3.87	75
Resources to Provide Training for Staff	-	13%	21%	31%	35%	3.87	75
Resources for Increased Compensation Component	5%	7%	14%	20%	54%	4.11	74
Implementation Timeline	7%	5%	22%	18%	47%	3.95	76
Building the Capacity for Understanding Among School Personnel	1%	7%	37%	30%	25%	3.71	76
Communication to Key Stakeholders	3%	17%	28%	33%	20%	3.50	76
Ongoing Support for Professional Development	-	16%	22%	29%	33%	3.79	76
Clear Guidance Concerning the Interpretation of the New Law	3%	13%	16%	21%	47%	3.97	76
Alignment of State Law/Rules/Regulations with Existing Personnel Policies and Contracts	1%	12%	24%	24%	39%	3.88	76
Analysis and Interpretation of Student Growth Data	1%	7%	15%	24%	53%	4.21	75

The lowest levels of concern appeared to be in areas that may be more under the direct control or discretion of a district. This included communication with key stakeholders, building capacity for understanding PE/PG among school personnel, and having resources for conducting classroom observations. All of these were rated as “extremely concerning” by less than one-third of superintendents.

### **Change Over Previous 12 Months**

Analyses comparing 2013 and 2014 reports for the 44 respondents who completed both surveys found a decrease in levels of concern in three of these areas. First, this subset of superintendents reported less concern regarding resources for conducting classroom observations ( $t(42) = -2.82, p = .007$ ), reflecting a decrease in their mean score from 4.07 to 3.51. Second, these superintendents also reported less concern regarding ongoing support professional development ( $t(42) = -2.81, p = .007$ ), reflecting a decline from 4.21 to 3.58. Finally, superintendents that completed the survey both years reported less concern regarding obtaining clear guidance on the interpretation of the law ( $t(42) = -3.13, p = .003$ ), reflecting a decline from 4.40 to 3.65.

### **POSSIBLE AREAS FOR ASSISTANCE**

Superintendents were also queried regarding the degree to which various types of additional support, resources, or implementation changes might assist PE/PG efforts in their district. These are summarized in Table 6, with additional thoughts offered by superintendents in open-ended questions.

### **Timeline**

With two-thirds of superintendents indicating that they were “Very Concerned” or “Extremely Concerned” regarding the implementation timeline (see Table 5), it is not surprising that half also indicated that more time to develop the PE/PG system would be very useful.

“We are heading in the right direction. However, time and money to do it correctly is a key issue.”

“I think that the timeframe for implementation is not realistic given the variables to look at and the stakeholders needing to be on the committee. In order to do this correctly and effectively, the state needs to give districts enough time to develop the tool and provide training.”

**Table 6. Superintendent Reports of the Degree of Usefulness of Additional Support (2014)**

How Useful Would the Following Resources or Supports be	Very Useful	Useful	Neutral	Useless	Very Useless	Does Not Need Help in this Area	N
Finding/Developing Observational Measures	17%	25%	29%	8%	4%	17%	76
Training of Observers/Raters	37%	30%	17%	4%	4%	8%	76
Finding/Developing Measures for Student Growth	44%	32%	13%	4%	3%	4%	75
Developing Student Growth Models	44%	28%	13%	3%	5%	7%	75
Analysis of Student Growth	42%	19%	22%	5%	5%	8%	64
Professional Development Opportunities for Educators	37%	38%	21%	-	4%	-	73
Additional Time to Develop an Evaluation System	50%	17%	18%	7%	1%	7%	76

The potential benefit of additional time may be particularly valuable for smaller districts and/or districts with more limited resources and staffing.

“In a small system this is hopeless. It requires a great deal of time and effort to create the system the legislature has in mind.”

“The small districts do not have the human resources to develop a plan to state guidelines in the time frame mandated.”

Similarly, even among superintendents expressing direct support of the PE/PG goals, there were some who were concerned that additional time was needed in order to develop high quality, effective and accurate systems.

“While I fully support the movement towards a system [that] evaluates teacher performance and incorporates student achievement, I feel that rushing into a system at this time will not be beneficial to teaching and learning. As a state we need to identify valid and reliable student performance data BEFORE using it to judge teacher performance.”

“I support the PE/PG concept, although ...time has not been given to districts to create and implement an evaluation system that actually will positively impact student performance (i.e. pilot - or not - next year, but have evaluation plan ready for review by no later than March 31, 2015). Why handcuff a potentially revolutionary change with a timeline that causes districts to trim the process?”

“Go slowly in order to develop a quality system. Roll out with limited resources will not produce quality teachers.”

Finally, it should be noted that some superintendents also reported that delays in the legislative and rule-making process played a role in subsequent delays at the district level, impeding the ability for districts to meet the original deadlines.

“The legislature should consider delaying the implementation of the Educator Effectiveness legislation for one year since the final over-ride of the Governor's veto happened on May 1, 2014. This would mean that districts would have the next two years to develop their Educator Effectiveness plans.”

“I am not sure that the current timeline for implementation (2015-2016) is reasonable. The delay in adopting the rules has delayed the pilot programs. I would recommend delay implementation until 2016-2017.”

“I support this process and think it is long overdue. However, the implementation timeline is very unrealistic given the lateness of the final draft of this legislation and the lack of training out there for using some of the models, such as Marzano.”

“It was disappointing to see such an important issue pushed through the process at the end of the session with so many outstanding issues remaining. It's understandable that there was a sense of urgency to put something forward. However, what we are now forced to work with lacks clarity, contains many unnecessary components and lacks fiscal support to implement appropriately.”

## **Assistance with Growth Measures**

As also reflected in Table 6, three-quarters of superintendents reported that additional assistance in finding measures for student growth (76%) would either be useful or very useful. To quote one superintendent:

“As much as humanly possible, the implementation of the student growth aspects of the system should be delayed or de-emphasized to permit the other, more important and more achievable parts of the system, to take root.”

This is consistent with previously stated concerns by superintendents (see Table 5) in which the highest overall area of concern was with the analysis and interpretation of student growth data.

## **Professional Development**

Three-quarters of superintendents also reported that additional assistance in providing professional development opportunities for educators (75%) would either be useful or very useful. Not surprisingly, professional development specifically on growth and evaluation models, as well as related topics were seen as valuable ways that the Maine Department of Education might help districts.

“We have been working on teacher evaluation for some time, but have waited to pilot [our system] a second time... because our first one did not work and we are exploring how to do the next one better. We have chosen to go with Marzano, but there is limited training that is available, it is very expensive, and the State does not hold regular workshops that help in the process. Mary Paine is excellent for help, but let's face it, there is a lot to this law and to do it well, there needs to be more support from the State. Schools have so many initiatives that have been asked of them in a short time...better to do this one well, than to implement a poor system and deal with the consequences including disgruntled teachers. There needs to be an extension for this to work well.”

Superintendents also noted that while professional development on evaluation and effective pedagogy is needed, a successful PE/PG system will also result in more fundamental changes to all layers of the school environment. This will ultimately require professional development and resources beyond pedagogical practice and effective/informative evaluation of teaching and learning.

“[Schools] will need a strong focus on just how different this process will be to current evaluation models....This system will need to change the instructional model in the classroom to be truly effective.”

“Some systems will need additional funds to provide sufficient training, development and longevity to any system that is developed. If this is to be the important factor of student learning and growth (as it should be) then other aspects of school leadership need to be funded in a more robust way so that the time and attention can be given by the school leaders and teachers to have this make the intended impact.”

### **Observation Measures**

Ratings by superintendents suggest they may be relatively more comfortable in regard to observational measures. For example, one sixth (17%) of superintendents reported needing no help in that area, and only 42% reported that such support would be seen as useful or very useful. It must be noted that this nevertheless still constitutes a significant portion of districts across the state.

### **Maine Department of Education Resources**

Additional questions (not included in Table 6) specifically queried superintendents regarding their use of Maine Department of Education resources related to evaluation and professional growth systems. Seventy-two percent of respondents reported that they had used such resources provided by the Maine Department of Education. Among those who had used these resources, none rated them as “Very Useful”, although 58% rated them as “Useful” or “Somewhat Useful”. Twenty percent of superintendents who had used Maine Department of Education evaluation and professional growth resources rated these resources as “Somewhat Useless”, “Useless”, or “Very Useless”.

### **Suggestions for Additional Supports**

Beyond topics previously addressed in this report, superintendents also offered a variety of suggestions for additional resources that might be provided by the Maine Department of Education, the Maine Legislature, or other partners. One type of potential assistance that was noted by several superintendents focused on providing templates and illustrative models.

“A template is necessary for small, rural schools [that] lack funds and manpower.”

“Let DOE develop a system and send it to us.”

This type of assistance could be expanded to have the Maine Department of Education serve as a nexus for models and methods developed throughout the state. This would provide a single point of contact through which districts could share tools, resources, or experiences.

“I hope models will be developed that are transparent and easy to administer. Sharing models across districts would be very helpful to small districts that lack the personnel resources to effectively develop their own from scratch. The DOE should be a ‘clearinghouse’ of models for the entire State.”

Consistent with other observations throughout this report, the complexity of evaluation combined with the changing nature of rules and expectations leads some superintendents to report that additional guidance and detail regarding the “nuts and bolts” of tools and metrics from the Department (and Legislature) would be valuable.

“The legislature also needs to finalize the law and determine what districts must implement. There should be guidance on the measurement tools and the determination of weight for the tools. Many of us are uncertain about what is actually expected and the way the law currently stands, litigation will increase, adding additional expenses to the districts.”

Finally, while noting support for the goals of PE/PG, a number of superintendents expressed concern that the extent of various initiatives being added to existing state formal and informal efforts, combined with changes to the PE/PG process itself, may unintentionally result in resistance by constituents and partners.

“I am a strong believer in teacher evaluation, including student performance (not just academic) data ... [but] please stop changing the rules, adding initiatives.”

“Please be extremely cautious about the regulations, to make sure this is doable. LD 1858 was powerful. The original draft of Chapter 180 was undoable (especially regarding the student growth portion). The revised draft of Chapter 180 is right on the line of doable and undoable. It will take a tremendous investment of time to implement this. Maine needs to be extremely cautious not to pile well-intended things onto this, or it will collapse under its own weight like the local assessment system did. The weak point

in LD 1858 / Chapter 180 is administrator time. That was the weak point before, and the new law / rule, while enabling some other things, doesn't address that weak link.”

For some districts, there is additional concern that changes may at times impede successful existing efforts or require redundant, unnecessary work.

“Some districts are ahead of the curve---rule-making that requires us to take two steps back (such as constituting a new stakeholder group) or requiring teacher "buy in" after they have already bought in is problematic.”

“Our present teacher evaluation system is well articulated and utilizes the Danielson model. We presently can focus on student achievement and through the process, as well as action plans, place student achievement front and center in the process. The state mandated changes will actually impair our ability to make student achievement and success (meaning more than academics) the major goal of the process by limiting the weight of student achievement to 20%. How did this happen? If a teacher is not effective in bringing about student growth, why do we employ them? Now, that most important 'job function' is limited to 20% of their performance rating. We will expend many, many hours to compromise a system for evaluation that we implemented three years ago and that is working to change classroom practice. How will this improve education in Maine?”

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this project was to assess the development of teacher performance evaluation / professional growth (PE/PG) systems in Maine through surveys of state superintendents. These surveys found uniform support for the core concepts underlying PE/PG, such as the belief that effective teaching has a positive impact on student achievement, and the belief that teacher instruction, student achievement, and academic growth can all be accurately assessed and evaluated. However, there was less support – although still a majority of superintendents – for the belief that *teacher evaluation* should be linked to student growth, or that PE/PG results should impact teacher’s merit pay. Perhaps reflecting these views, superintendents reported mixed feelings regarding the degree to which they believed that Maine’s teacher-effectiveness laws would ultimately impact teaching and learning.

A fundamental question with which Maine has been struggled this past year is the role of student growth in PE/PG systems and teacher evaluation. Not surprisingly, this was an area of particular concern, with superintendents rating the analysis and interpretation of student growth data as their *single greatest concern* out of a list of possible issues. Specifically, over half of the participating superintendents reported being “extremely concerned” about the analysis and interpretation of student growth data, with three-fourths of indicating that additional assistance with growth measures would be useful to their districts.

A second fundamental issue which has received considerable attention involves State deadlines for PE/PG system rollout. A key question underlying this report is whether districts are on target to meet the State requirements of (1) piloting PE/PG systems during the 2014-2015 school year, and (2) implementing PE/PG systems during the 2015-2016 school year. Superintendents for nearly one-third of responding districts indicated that they may not be able to pilot their PE/PG system until at least the 2015-2016 school year, and may not be able to implement their system until the 2016-2017 school year or later. At a minimum, this would reflect a one-year delay beyond the deadlines established by the State.

Consequently, it is not surprising that nearly half of these superintendents indicated that the required deadlines were extremely concerning and additional time would be very useful. This view was not limited to those districts that were at-risk of missing implementation deadlines. For example, several superintendents expressed support for Maine’s PE/PG efforts, yet noted that additional time would help all districts develop high quality, effective and accurate systems. Furthermore, superintendents suggested that additional time may be particularly valuable for smaller districts and/or districts with more limited resources and staffing.

Finally, superintendents identified additional ways, beyond those already described, in which the state and education partners might aid the development and implementation of PE/PG systems. First, several superintendents reported that an expanded library of templates and illustrative models for instruments and methods would be valuable. For example, the Maine Department of Education might serve as a nexus for PE/PG resources developed by districts, facilitating the sharing of tools, resources, and experiences among Maine schools. In addition, expanded support for professional development opportunities addressing effective pedagogy, evaluation,

and student growth was also widely seen as a valuable way to help districts. Finally, a number of superintendents reported that additional guidance from the State regarding the “nuts and bolts” of evaluation tools and effectiveness measures would also be valuable (e.g., how to determine appropriate weights, how to combine multiple competing measures).

## APPENDIX: SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT (2014)

1) Rate the following based on your current beliefs about teacher evaluation

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teacher effectiveness impacts student achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student achievement (e.g., towards specific standards) can be measured in a valid way	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student academic growth (e.g., from one year to the next) can be measured in a valid way	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher evaluation should be linked to student academic growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instruction can be accurately evaluated and judged	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher evaluation should be tied to merit / compensation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An effective teacher evaluation system informs professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maine's laws, rules and regulations regarding teacher evaluation will result in improved teaching and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2) How did (or will) the following issues influence your selection of a teacher evaluation system?

	Major Effect	Moderate Effect	Minor Effect	No Effect
Sufficient support for teacher evaluation system development and adoption (state and locally)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teacher support for adoption of system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sufficient availability of training for implementation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transparency of evaluation processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility/adaptability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of the system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability and relevance of the system to improve student achievement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability and relevance of the system to judge teachers fairly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability and relevance to improve teacher effectiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3) What is your level of concern for the following issues?

	Extremely Concerned	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Slightly Concerned	Not at all Concerned
Resources to conduct classroom observations	<input type="radio"/>				
Resources to collect student performance data	<input type="radio"/>				
Resources to provide training for evaluators	<input type="radio"/>				
Resources to provide training for staff	<input type="radio"/>				
Resources for increased compensation component	<input type="radio"/>				
Implementation timeline	<input type="radio"/>				
Building the capacity for understanding among school personnel	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication to key stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>				
On-going support for professional development	<input type="radio"/>				
Clear guidance concerning the interpretation of the new law	<input type="radio"/>				
Alignment of state law/rules/regulation with existing personnel policies and contracts	<input type="radio"/>				
Analysis and interpretation of student growth data	<input type="radio"/>				
Other	<input type="radio"/>				

4) Has your district received TIF funding that was used to help develop a teacher evaluation / professional growth system?

- Yes
- No

5) When do you anticipate being able to pilot your teacher evaluation / professional growth system?

- We have already piloted our system
- The first half of the 2014-2015 academic year
- The second half of the 2014-2015 academic year
- The first half of the 2015-2016 academic year
- The second half of the 2015-2016 academic year
- The 2016-2017 academic year or later

6) When do you anticipate being able to implement your teacher evaluation / professional growth system?

- We have already implemented our system
- The 2014-2015 academic year
- The 2015-2016 academic year
- The 2016-2017 academic year
- The 2017-2018 academic year or later

7) Have you used Maine DOE resources (e.g., [www.maine.gov/doe/excellence/resources/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/doe/excellence/resources/index.html)) related to teacher evaluation / professional growth systems?

- Yes
- No

8) How useful have you found those Maine DOE resources?

- Very Useless
- Useless
- Somewhat Useless
- Neutral
- Somewhat Useful
- Useful
- Very Useful

9) How useful would your district find additional support or assistance in the following areas...

	Very Useless	Useless	Neutral	Useful	Very Useful	Our District Does Not Need Help in this Area
Finding or developing observational measures	<input type="radio"/>					
Training of observers / raters	<input type="radio"/>					
Finding or developing measures for student growth	<input type="radio"/>					
Developing student growth models	<input type="radio"/>					
Analysis of student growth	<input type="radio"/>					
Professional development opportunities for educators identified through teacher evaluation systems	<input type="radio"/>					
Additional time to develop an evaluation system	<input type="radio"/>					

10) Do you currently use a comprehensive system (e.g., a system that uses multiple observations, multiple measures, student achievement, etc.) for teacher evaluation and / or professional growth in your district?

- Yes
- No, but we are actively developing one
- No, and we are not currently actively developing one

11) Which of the following sets of standards serves as the primary basis for your teacher evaluation and / or professional growth system?

- InTASC
- NBTS
- Marzano
- Danielson
- We do not presently have an established set of standards upon which our system is based
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

12) How does your district measure student growth? (Select all that apply)

- Annual scores on standardized assessments (e.g., NECAP)
- Annual scores on non-standardized assessments (e.g., local assessment measures)
- Standardized assessments at the start and end of each academic year
- Non-standardized assessments at the start and end of each academic year
- Other (describe below) \_\_\_\_\_

13) Please rate the following characteristics of your teacher evaluation / professional growth system:  
 (More stars = more favorable rating)

Efficient use of personnel time	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Affordable cost for tools, materials and services	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Value of feedback to teachers	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Value of feedback to administrators	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Direct impact on instructional quality	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Direct impact on student learning	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

14) Please estimate how long it takes on average to complete one teacher evaluation over the course of a year. If you are still developing your system, answer based on your expectation once the system is fully implemented. Also, assume the teacher is a "typical" case. Include in your total the time required for direct observations, meetings, and report writing associated with the teacher evaluation process.

	Total Hours per year
Total number of administrator hours to complete one teacher evaluation	
Total number of teacher hours to complete one teacher evaluation	

15) Approximately how many teachers will need to be evaluated in your district? \_\_\_\_\_

16) Estimate the total additional funds that are required to conduct teacher evaluations in your district (not including the cost of personnel time). \_\_\_\_\_

17) Final comments or feedback for members of the legislature about the implementation of teacher evaluation systems in Maine. (Note: text box will hold as much text as you type).