

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING
TEACHER EVALUATION/ EFFECTIVENESS

Testimony of

Team Pennsylvania Foundation

Respectfully submitted by Matthew A. Zieger, President & CEO

Team Pennsylvania Foundation thanks the Senate Education Committee for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Teacher/Principal Evaluation System and would like to thank Chairmen Piccola and Dinnaman and the distinguished members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to discuss the statewide effort to significantly improve Pennsylvania's teacher evaluation system.

Team Pennsylvania Foundation is a public/private partnership with the Commonwealth that believes our government can be more effective and efficient, our communities should be fertile grounds for business growth, and our children should be provided the highest level of educational opportunities available. Team PA was created in 1997 to as a formal structure to bridge the gap between government and the business community for the betterment of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Simply put, we engage private resources to further public good.

Fundamentally, Team PA Foundation believes that education is economic development and that there is no better economic policy than one that produces more graduates ready to succeed in post-secondary education, the workplace and life. Recognizing the great needs in our public education system, Team Pennsylvania has become a formal structure through which government, business and educational leaders can work together to set bold goals, make tough choices, and together to build a more effective and efficient education system in the Commonwealth.

Team Pennsylvania Foundation has served in precisely this role as a partner in the development of a more effective, performance-based evaluation system for Pennsylvania's teachers and

leaders. This project was made possible only through the generous support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and nearly one hundred other businesses large and small across the Commonwealth that provide financial support to our Foundation.

As the Pennsylvania Department of Education has already shared, the evaluation pilot project boldly sets the goal of developing quality teacher and principal evaluation tools designed to help evaluators' rate and ultimately improve teaching performance. Teachers and leaders in four pilot school systems were trained and then used the rating tools within their schools to test the system.

Team Pennsylvania strongly believes that Pennsylvania needs to move beyond the current evaluation system that is reliant on distinguishing teacher performance as solely "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". Our education system must be able to recognize outstanding teacher performance while also helping those who need to improve.

Research has shown the number one indicator of student success is the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom. A quality evaluation system, like in every other business, can be instrumental in making a full range of district human capital decisions. In this case, those key decisions and supports brought in along the way can directly improve and support teacher effectiveness, and thereby a student's achievement and success. It would also assist education leaders on a local and statewide level in identifying needs and strategies such as professional development, support or additional responsibilities. Furthermore, such a system can provide a foundation that enables districts to better attract and retain the best candidates.

Pennsylvania owes it to our students, their parents, and businesses to develop an evaluation system that fairly and honestly reviews teacher performance. The state's investment in creating an effective evaluation system will pay tremendous dividends for all Pennsylvanians, and Team PA Foundation believes this will boldly transform the education system with profound impacts for many years to come.