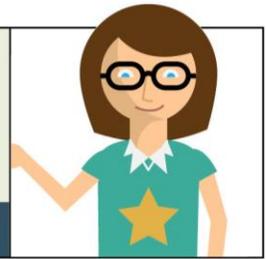OPPORTUNITY CULTURE
An Initiative of Public Impact

EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

STEP 2: EVALUATION REDESIGN PROCESS

EVALUATION REDESIGN ACTION STEPS

☐ Use *Evaluation Design Participation Planner* to determine the roles of various stakeholders

☐ Choose an Opportunity Culture (OC) Evaluation Design Team to design evaluation for OC and similar roles

☐ Gather input from many individuals within each affected group. Use the *Evaluation Input Sheet*.

☐ Identify strengths and challenges of *current* evaluation system. Use *Key Elements of a Teacher Evaluation System*; *Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools*; *Using Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools;* and *Establish a Vision for Educator Evaluation in Opportunity Culture Schools*

☐ Identify changes necessary for implementing Opportunity Culture models. Use *Using Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools* and *Establish a Vision for Educator Evaluation in Opportunity Culture Schools*

☐ Choose evaluation content—measures, ratings, weighting, and tools to measure. Use materials from **Step 3**.

☐ Align formal accountability and data systems—ensure that teachers and teacher-leaders are matched to the right students, subjects, and team members. Use materials from **Step 3**.

☐ Define evaluation process—who does what, when, and using what tools. Use materials from **Step 4**.

☐ Determine how evaluation will be used, and plan those systems—development, career paths, talent management, and formal accountability tracking. Use materials from **Step 5**.

☐ Prepare to improve evaluation and its uses

CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDANCE

When a district begins using Opportunity Culture roles, it must decide what to change about the *content* of evaluation, the *process* for evaluation, and the *uses of evaluation data*. Districts also must decide *when* to make changes. In most locations, forming a district evaluation design team will help create buy-in and ensure that design details fit the district's culture.

Nearly all districts have a pre-existing teacher evaluation system that can identify teachers who most consistently land in about the top 25 percent of that evaluation system. Reaching more students and teaching peers with those teachers is a key goal in an Opportunity Culture.

The **content and measures** used in these evaluation systems, however, were built for traditional one-teacher-one-classroom roles. They were not built for teachers reaching more students and formally

leading peers. They typically do not consider how individuals' teaching roles change by adding paraprofessional support and age-appropriate technology, specializing in elementary school, working on teaching teams, or leading those teams.

Likewise, the **evaluation processes** weren't built for new school models. They too presume that teachers work mostly alone, and that the best feedback comes from infrequent student data review and infrequent observations, often by outsiders—difficult to schedule frequently and revealing only a sliver of the teaching role.

Note that those weaknesses in traditional evaluations persist even if a school keeps one-size-fits-all roles and teachers working alone. This prevents desired *uses* of evaluation: improvement during the year, career advancement, and planning for a strong pipeline of talent in a district.

Fortunately, some great organizations have outlined the elements of a strong **teacher evaluation system in traditional school models** (see *Key Elements of a Teacher Evaluation System*), and explored the weaknesses of first and second-generation evaluations (see *Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools*). Districts and states can use these to guide some decision-making for evaluation in an Opportunity Culture—built into the steps and tools of this guide.

The **Opportunity Culture models themselves also solve some of the problems prevalent in existing systems**. Early Opportunity Culture schools are already piloting basic evaluation and development tools, which we used as a basis for this guide. Combined, these provide an excellent launchpad for new districts piloting and scaling up team-based, teacher-led, extended-reach school models.

Most districts pilot Opportunity Culture models in some schools before scaling up. **During the pilot phase, most districts dock new roles into existing teacher evaluation systems**, simply supplementing the tools and processes with content and steps appropriate for the responsibilities of Opportunity Culture roles. For example, one district added a leadership rubric to its existing teacher evaluation to use for multi-classroom leaders.

Districts can use the tools provided here during the pilot phase, alone or incorporating elements into existing systems temporarily. Or, if leaders know in advance that they plan to scale up the Opportunity Culture models into many or all schools, and have a year of planning time, human resources staff can work with the Evaluation Design Team to build a new system to match team-based, teacher-led, extended-reach school models in advance.

When a district begins to scale up into a substantial portion of its schools, a more permanent change is needed—whether altering the district system, docking into a statewide system, or advocating for changes to a statewide system. Districts can use this time of change to improve upon the shortcomings of their existing evaluation systems, if they have autonomy. They also can collaborate with the state to improve state evaluation and accountability systems that hamper team teaching, teacher-led teams and extended-reach roles, so that more districts can follow. Without proper changes, districts that scale up will

need to build a second evaluation system, creating distracting paperwork and uncertainty about how Opportunity Culture teachers and other teachers move between traditional and Opportunity Culture schools within the district and state; this serves no one well.

The *redesign* process is important, too. Making changes of this magnitude requires input from all those affected, most importantly teachers and principals working in Opportunity Culture schools. Many past teacher evaluation design processes have failed because leaders have not engaged these key groups. Teachers and principals working in Opportunity Culture schools can identify the strengths of existing systems, changes needed to fit Opportunity Culture roles, changes needed to fix problems in the current systems, and key ways evaluation should affect development and career path opportunities.

An Evaluation Design Team can help gather stakeholder input and bring it to bear on the design process. The group should be led by the Opportunity Culture initiative leader for the district, who may employ technical assistance to facilitate the design process and implementation of the team's recommendations. ***The superintendent must***

make final decisions to align with the district's vision and any collective bargaining agreement.

The action steps shown at the beginning of Step 2 cover major elements of the redesign process and refer to other tools and sections of this guide for help with teacher evaluation content, process, and uses of an evaluation, such as professional development. Here is a brief overview of each step:

☐ **Determine roles of various stakeholders in the design process.** Use the *Evaluation Design Participation Planner* to identify the key groups affected by the evaluation system who will be engaged in the design process, identify each group's representatives, and indicate the type of input each group will have in the process. Types of input can include participating on the Evaluation Design Team, providing input into evaluation design, being kept informed of design decisions, and/or making final evaluation design decisions.

☐ **Choose an Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team** to design evaluation for Opportunity Culture and similar roles. This should include teachers and principals in Opportunity Culture schools, human resource leaders, data/IT leaders, union leaders in collective bargaining districts, and other key district staff and affected groups. Keep the group at a reasonable size, however, to avoid diluting each person's input: No more than 20 for an advisory group and no more than 7 to 10 for a group that will roll up its sleeves on design details. Community input in other forums, such as teacher staff meetings or PTA meetings, may also inform the process, and all stakeholders should be kept informed about major steps and outcomes.

☐ **Gather input from many individuals within each affected group.** Use the *Evaluation Input Sheet* to collect input from teams of teachers and principals, as well as other affected groups. This could be used as a guide for focus group conversations or as the basis for a survey.

☐ **Identify strengths and challenges of *current* evaluation system**. Use *Key Elements of a Teacher Evaluation System:* and *Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools*, to prepare for discussion, and use the tools *Using Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools: A Better Plan to*

Build an Opportunity Culture and *Establish a Vision for Educator Evaluation in Opportunity Culture Schools* to facilitate general discussion and decision-making by the Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team. The Opportunity Culture initiative leader or a technical assistance provider working for that person should facilitate this discussion, so that the district Opportunity Culture team can use the input in any content and process design later.

☐ **Identify changes necessary for implementing Opportunity Culture models**. Use *Using Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools: A Better Plan to Build an Opportunity Culture* and *Establish a Vision for Educator Evaluation in Opportunity Culture Schools.* This may be part of the prior step or a subsequent meeting.

☐ **Choose evaluation content—measures, ratings, weighting, and tools to measure**. Use materials from **Step 3**. The Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team must decide whether to use or adapt the materials provided here. In all cases, this team will need to make several design detail decisions, such as the weighting of different measures, and link these decisions to career advancement opportunities. The Opportunity Culture initiative leader and team can present options to the Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team or make decisions based on that team's prior input. The Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team should be kept informed of all decisions and have the chance to review and comment upon draft materials. All involved should have the *Evaluation Design Checklist* to check that content and design decisions are complete

☐ **Align formal accountability and data systems**. Ensure that teachers and teacher-leaders are matched to the right students, subjects, and team members. Use materials from **Step 3**. Principals and district administrators can use the *Evaluation and Accountability Database Tool* and input into human resource information systems, both for communicating accountability accurately and for talent management. In nearly all cases, the data department within the district will need to make changes in how data are collected and reported to match Opportunity Culture roles. Ideally, the data department and human resource staff will

also work with a vendor to provide a dashboard of Opportunity Culture staffing models, student outcomes, and other key data being reported by other Opportunity Culture schools. Some data changes should be coordinated with the state, so that the district is not creating a new system for evaluation data collection and reporting while bearing the costs of maintaining the old system. The Opportunity Culture initiative leader and team can present options to the Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team or make decisions based on that team's prior input. The Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team should be kept informed of all decisions and have the chance to review and comment upon draft materials.

☐ **Define evaluation process—who does what, when, and using what tools**. Use materials from

Step 4. The Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team must decide whether to use or adapt the suggested processes and materials provided here. The Opportunity Culture initiative leader and team can present options to the Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team or make decisions based on that team's prior input. The Opportunity Culture Evaluation Design Team should be kept informed of all decisions and have the chance to review and comment upon draft materials.

☐ **Determine how evaluation will be used, and plan those systems—development, career paths, talent management, and formal accountability tracking**. Use materials from **Step 5**, where we briefly touch on key issues in each of these areas and provide a sample development planning tool.

Little e, Big E: Ongoing Feedback Produces "No Surprise" Annual Evaluations

Evaluation and feedback is continuous within teams and between supervisors and individuals, who work together regularly on the job. We call this "Little e," because it happens continually, in *small* increments as work is done. Midyear check-ins can also provide developmental focal points to supplement routine feedback.

Annual reviews, or "Big E," provide the chance to focus on the big picture and the long term: Celebrating how each teacher has progressed over the year, identifying emerging strengths so each teacher's role accentuates them in the future, and acknowledging gaps for development the following year. When Little e is routine, there are no surprises in Big E annual reviews.

Annual reviews also provide the chance to discuss career advancement possibilities for the future. Teachers remaining in the same roles can have a clear plan for using their strengths, improving, and really enjoying their work. Teachers advancing can prepare ahead to prevent typical gaps when making career leaps.

Little e might be less formal than Big E, but it should not be left to chance. Evaluation Design Teams will need to determine which measures are best used for feedback and development during the year and which are best used to inform the annual evaluation.

Tools

☐ **Evaluation Input Sheet**: Simple tool for getting input into evaluation content and the process.

☐ **Establish a Vision for Educator Evaluation in Opportunity Culture Schools**: Use with the design team to get far more detailed input and to do more detailed analysis.

☐ **Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools**: One-page summary of lessons from evaluation systems. and discussion of key elements.

☐ **Using Lessons from Teacher Evaluation in Traditionally Staffed Schools:** Helps team or district administrator identify how the new evaluation plan will use lessons from past evaluation to build a better plan for Opportunity Culture schools.

☐ **Key Elements of a Teacher Evaluation System**: Compilation of advice from SREB and the Center for Great Teachers and Leaders that will help evaluation design organizers.

Resources

Elements of Evaluation

Southern Regional Education Board, n.d.

State profiles summarize the efforts made by states and districts to implement evaluation and feedback systems, including the SREB Elements of Evaluation—with basic information about the state evaluation framework.

Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems

Center for Great Teachers and Leaders, February 2014

Outlines key components of a teacher evaluation system, roles for a state, and models for state and districts. Also has database that allows comparisons among states on each of the eight key components.

Teachers for the 21st Century: Using Evaluation to Improve Teaching

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013

Reports on the third International Summit on the Teaching Profession, which focused on teacher evaluation systems. It addresses standards and governance; measures and procedures; capacity and roles for conducting evaluations; use of results; and accountability.

Re-Imagining Teaching: Five Structures to Transform the Profession

National Network of State Teachers of the Year, October 2013

Educator-developed framework outlining five structures needed to ensure that teacher evaluation includes essential professional supports in addition to accountability mechanisms.

The Two Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

Robert Marzano in ASCD's *Educational Leadership*, November 2012

Explains how a teacher evaluation system designed primarily for measurement will look quite different from a system designed primarily for development. Uses a table adapted from ASCD that distinguishes items that can be used to rapidly rate teacher competence in the classroom (see page 17).

Teacher Evaluation 2.0

The New Teacher Project, October 2010

Outlines six design standards for teacher evaluation systems, including annual evaluation, rigorous expectations, multiple measures, multiple rating levels, regular feedback, and significance in employment decisions.

Teach Plus

Teach Plus teacher fellows regularly publish briefs and position pieces in response to their local contexts, on a range of topics, including teacher evaluation, peer feedback, and peer evaluation.