

THE WIDGET EFFECT

Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness



COLORADO FACT SHEET

Denver • Pueblo

Research for *The Widget Effect* was conducted in collaboration with Denver Public Schools and Pueblo City Schools. Statewide, The New Teacher Project surveyed 2,428 Colorado teachers, 184 administrators and examined over 5,800 evaluation records.

Key findings in surveyed districts include:

- More than 6 in 10 teachers believe that dismissing poorly performing non-probationary teachers is important for building a high-quality workforce.
- 7 in 10 administrators believe there are non-probationary teachers in their buildings who should be dismissed for poor performance.
- Virtually no non-probationary teachers in Denver or Pueblo have received an unsatisfactory performance rating since 2005.

Colorado teacher evaluation systems almost never assign the lowest ratings to non-probationary teachers.

District	Satisfactory Ratings	Unsatisfactory Ratings
Denver	98.6%	1.4%
Pueblo	99.7%	0.3%

Denver and Pueblo data represent school years 2005-06 to 2007-08.

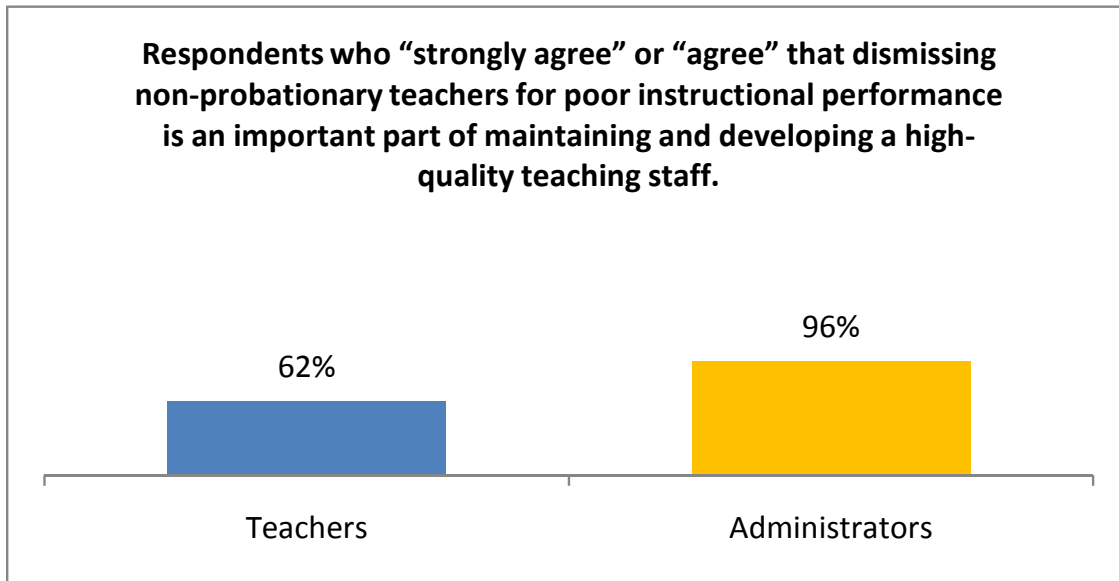
Teacher performance data is rarely used to make key human capital decisions.

X indicates when teacher performance is taken into account.

	Denver	Pueblo
Recruitment		
Hiring/Placement		
Professional Development		
Compensation	X	
Granting Tenure		
Retention		
Layoffs		
Remediation	X	X
Dismissal	X	X

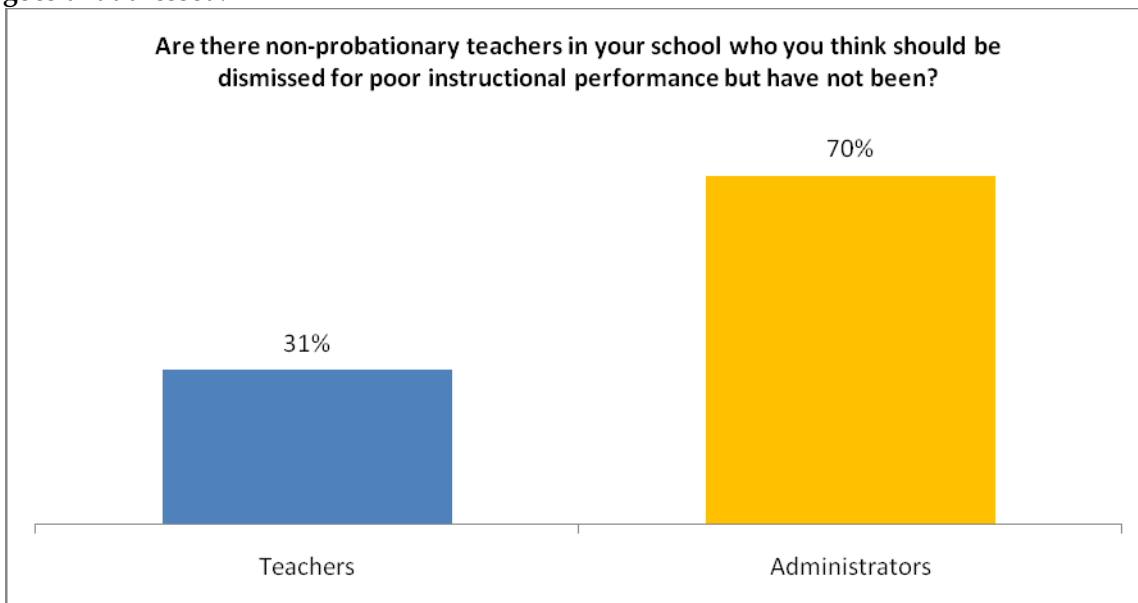


Teachers and administrators agree that dismissing poorly performing teachers is important for building a high-quality workforce.



Survey data collected from 2,482 teachers and 184 administrators across the two Colorado study sites.

Despite the fact that both teachers and administrators recognize poor performance in their buildings, it goes unaddressed.



Survey data collected from 2,482 teachers and 184 administrators across the two Colorado study sites.

Only some teachers report receiving quality feedback on their performance, yet most administrators feel confident in their ability to provide it.

- 63 percent of teachers “strongly agree” or “agree” that their evaluator provided them with constructive feedback and strategies that they could use to improve instruction.
- 89 percent of administrators feel confident in their ability to provide teachers with information and strategies to improve their instructional performance.

Colorado Policy Overview

Background Information

- Number of school districts: 200¹
- Number of students: 794,026²
- Number of students in poverty (FRPL): 217,324
- Number of classroom teachers: 46,973
- Number of initial teaching certificates issued during school year 2006-07: 2,513³
- Colorado does not have a collective bargaining law, but teachers in many districts engage in collective bargaining.

Teacher and Student Data System⁴

- Colorado does not have a data system that can be used to provide evidence of teacher effectiveness.
- The state assigns each teacher a unique identifier; however, these identifiers cannot be used to match individual teacher records with individual student records
- Students are assigned unique identifiers that connect student data across key databases across years.
- The state has the capacity to match student test records from year to year in order to measure student academic growth.

Non-Probationary Status/Tenure

- Colorado refers to its tenured teachers as “non-probationary” rather than “tenured.”
- Colorado teachers generally earn non-probationary status after teaching for three consecutive years in one of the state’s school districts.

Teacher Evaluation

- Colorado state law requires that probationary teachers receive at least two documented observations and one evaluation that results in a written evaluation report each academic year. Non-probationary teachers receive at least one observation each year and one evaluation that results in a written evaluation report every three years.
- The state allows school districts to customize their teacher evaluation system, but at least one component must be directly related to classroom instruction and include multiple measures of student performance.⁵ Multiple measures of student performance can be either objective or subjective in nature. Objective measures, such as student test scores, are not required.
- Under state law, evaluations must be written, contain an improvement plan and be specific as to the strengths and weaknesses in the performance of the individual being evaluated.⁶
- The state requires districts to use two levels to measure teacher performance—“Satisfactory” and “Unsatisfactory” (some districts use different language but a similar binary structure).

Compensation

- Colorado does not forbid or encourage differentiated compensation for instructional effectiveness. Several districts use a performance-based compensation program.
- However, the state does not support retention pay for effective teachers. Local districts determine salary schedules and/or policies.⁷

Remediation and Dismissal

- State law requires school districts to place teachers who receive an unsatisfactory evaluation on a remediation plan. The plan must target their deficiencies, and the district must provide resources and assistance to improve support. The teacher must perform satisfactorily on their next evaluation or face the prospect of dismissal.⁸
- The teacher dismissal process can take up to 82 days from start to finish, not including the remediation process.



¹ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/districtprofiles/index.asp>

² <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/stateprofiles/sresult.asp?mode=full&displaycat=1&s1=08>

³ School year 2006-07. <https://title2.ed.gov/Title2DR/NumCertified.asp>

⁴ http://www.nctq.org/stpy08/reports/stpy_colorado.pdf and <http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/survey/states/CO>

⁵ Colorado Code 22.9.106(1)(e)

⁶ Colorado Revised Statutes 22-9-106(3)

⁷ Colorado Revised Statutes 22-63-401

⁸ Colorado Revised Statutes 22-9-106 (3.5) and (4.5)

