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# An Investigation of Teacher Evaluation Systems and How They Can Be Transformed To Improve Teaching and Learning: A Change Leadership Plan

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AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEMS AND HOW THEY  
CAN BE TRANSFORMED TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING:  
A CHANGE LEADERSHIP PLAN

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of  
Doctor of Education  
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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## NLU Digital Commons Document Origination Statement

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This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement with a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner, et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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## ABSTRACT

Numerous states have contributed to the overhaul of teacher evaluation systems by imposing mandatory guidelines for the development of new measures. The purpose of this Change Leadership plan was to build upon my research “Principal Perspectives on the Current State of the Art of Teacher Evaluations: A Program Evaluation” which revealed a need to investigate how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology to streamline the process and thus improve teaching and learning. Therefore, this Change Leadership plan aimed to address two important questions. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? The survey data gathered from school principals in this study revealed there are multiple ways to use technology to support the teacher evaluation process. These include: conducting observations using mobile devices such as the iPad, purchasing software that can be used for walkthroughs, utilizing video documentation and other digital technology to support documentation, and providing timely feedback to teachers informing them of their evaluation results.

The current educational climate offers a momentous opportunity to ultimately change the culture of teacher evaluations by developing systems that holistically support teaching and learning. In addition, our current trajectory of advancements in digital transformation supports the feasibility of integrating technology into teacher evaluation systems to streamline this process and better support teachers in the improvement of their practice.

## PREFACE

In the U.S., there is no shortage of educational reform strategies or models. The key to reform lies in the implementation of these efforts. If we continue to hold onto standardized test scores as the central measure for assessing teacher performance, we will in fact produce the same results. We do not lack pedagogical scholars or educational best practices, but we do lack the ability to let go of past failed attempts. Unfortunately, with each new effort, these failed practices are somehow woven into the fabric we call transformation.

As an aspiring school superintendent, one of the challenges I have experienced and brought forward through this Change Leadership plan relates to the question of how to best lead in the digital age. However, the existing challenge for this kind of leadership is being able to let go of the policies, procedures, and practices of the past that do not fit our increasingly networked culture. The development of this Change Leadership plan has surfaced the fact that I am deeply committed to learning creative and innovative ways to change the structure of our educational system so that it meets the needs of learners today and develops the ideas for tomorrow. This change research focused on one aspect of accomplishing this goal: investigating how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology to streamline the process to improve teaching and learning.

This Change Leadership plan provided me with the opportunity to self-reflect and address the issues that encompass my commitment. I have come to realize that technology alone is not the answer and that my vision of transforming the way teachers are evaluated by integrating technology is only one aspect of changing the structure of

our educational system. However, given the current impact of digital transformation, I have also come to more deeply believe that investigating ways in which technology can support district goals for transforming pedagogy and learning environments is an important investment. To support this position, this Change Leadership plan builds upon my quantitative Program Evaluation research through gathering qualitative research data on two core questions. How is technology being used with current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? The goal of this current study is to research the answers to these questions. Ultimately, I hope to assist a school district in developing a vision that includes a solid infrastructure for systematically using technology to enrich educational practices and significantly improve student learning by preparing students for the demands of a global society and internationally competitive economy.

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## SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

This Change Leadership plan addressed prominent issues surrounding teacher evaluations in Chicago and the U.S. It also explored how professional development is reflected in teacher evaluation tools. Next, this plan focused on an international review of how teacher evaluations are used abroad. Finally, the role technology can play to support the teacher evaluation process was examined because for school principals, teacher evaluations represent a complex challenge.

Around the country, the topic of teacher evaluations is at the forefront of the debate on educational reform. The starting point for true reform must be the standards that define teacher quality; however, if these standards are not connected to actual teacher practice, they are meaningless (Stewart, 2013). This problem of disconnect between standards and actual evaluation practice is not unique to the U.S. Teacher evaluation has emerged as an international issue raised by many countries. Reported flaws with the system include, evaluations performed by administrators who lack the time, training, and specific content knowledge to make accurate assessments regarding teacher performance. In addition, evaluations serve merely as a perfunctory role in schools, and provide little effort to support teaching and learning (Stewart, 2013).

In light of Stewart's assessment, integrating technology into the teacher evaluation process could be the key component that is needed to streamline this process for administrators as well as to better support teachers in the improvement of their practice.

## Rationale

Based upon my Program Evaluation research, I determined that there is a need to investigate how to use technology to streamline the teacher evaluation process. The data gathered in that study revealed that approximately 70% of the principals surveyed indicated technology is not used as part of their teacher evaluation system. Stewart (2013) believed it was clear that technology would even more rapidly be impacting education and changing teacher roles and, therefore, argued that “just as appraisal systems are intended to promote continuous improvement, they themselves will need to continuously improve or will risk becoming ossified” (p. 17).

As a former preschool director, my role included completing yearly staff performance appraisals. In this role, I found that it was exceedingly difficult to holistically evaluate teachers because the tool we used did not support this practice. The rating system was highly subjective and often damaged relationships between administrators and staff. Teachers felt that the evaluation tool was used solely as a means for dismissal. When I moved on to a new role as project manager for a Head Start agency, I recognized the urgent need to research and develop a comprehensive teacher evaluation system that integrates technology to streamline the performance review process for teachers and administrators.

## Goals

The purpose of this Change Leadership plan was to build upon my earlier Program Evaluation research study, which revealed a need to investigate how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology to streamline the process to improve teaching and learning. The goals of this current qualitative study

were to answer two core questions. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process?

### Setting

This research study involved gathering data from five countries, 36 states, and 78 cities. The participants included 82 current school principals who were administrators in early childhood education as well as elementary school, middle school, and high school education settings. The schools represented in this study included 74 public schools, seven private schools, and one parochial school. Capturing this range of perspectives added a global view of current teacher evaluation processes. Although, this study was not designed to specifically gather data from international participants, I certainly welcomed their feedback. Their responses were included in the data collection, but due to the small sample size of each of the countries represented, it was not used to make inferences regarding individual countries or for international comparisons.

## SECTION TWO: ASSESSING THE 4CS

### Contexts

Today, teacher evaluations are the focus of both political and public attention. In an effort to improve our nation's schools, the federal government created a plan to provide financial support to school districts and states to develop new teacher evaluation systems that effectively improve the quality of teaching and learning across the US. According to Goe, Holdhelde and Miller (2011), financial incentives provided by the federal government, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Race to the Top Competition, opened the door for states to get involved in creating effective measures for evaluating teachers. Goe et al. (2011) maintained that discussions around this topic are also fueled by research evidence supporting the need to develop systems that address the complexities of teaching and learning. Numerous states have contributed to the overhaul of teacher evaluation systems by imposing mandatory guidelines for the development of new measures. Groups of stakeholders have come together from across states to research and assess best practices related to developing effective teacher evaluation systems (Goe et al., 2011). In addition, Stewart (2013) highlighted an international commitment toward this agenda. We are currently experiencing a time where school systems all over the world are undergoing major bureaucratic transformation. Teachers are at the center of these improvement efforts and "how to evaluate the quality of teachers has become a key and sometimes controversial component of these reform efforts and a complex challenge in many countries" (p. 2). Stewart also noted that this challenge was the central focus of the third International Summit on the Teaching Profession which was held in Amsterdam and drew together

ministers of education, teacher's union leaders, outstanding teachers, school leaders, and other education experts from high-performing and rapidly-improving countries.

Goe et al. (2011) further explained that the new expectation placed upon states to ensure local school districts use quality measures for evaluating teachers places them in a new arena, one in which they are not accustomed to being accountable. This new found responsibility of the states can be credited to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the ARRA reform goals and assurances. For years, many states have taken a back seat with regard to certain educational matters and allowed local school districts to be the primary decision makers. However, this practice is now changing, beginning with teacher evaluations, and states are now expected to establish guidelines on how they will share this responsibility locally.

The large monetary rewards provided by the federal government's Race to the Top competition have also created a sense of urgency among some states to create laws or review existing laws in an effort to develop effective measures for evaluating teachers. However, the challenges facing many states today are the interpretation and implementation of these new policies as well as developing a collaborative approach (Goe et al., 2011). It is important for states to facilitate this collaborative process through ongoing communication with local districts to ensure that these education leaders understand the new teacher evaluation policies and develop strategies for successful implementation (Goe et al., 2011).

### Culture

Teacher evaluation systems are impacted by the culture of education. According

to Elmore (1996), finding evidence of engaging teaching often eludes administrators because the premise held is that only a few select teachers are genetically predisposed to possessing this ability. The lack of evidence disproving this claim makes it fundamentally difficult to subscribe to any other belief. This school of thought allows education leaders to negate their professional responsibility to address the need for more research supporting evidence of teacher engagement. Contending that the phenomenon of exceptional teaching exists only in pockets of the broad educational spectrum further influences the cultural belief that these are in fact innate qualities possessed by a select few recipients. "The existence of exemplars, without some way of capitalizing on their talents, only reinforces the notion that ambitious teaching is an individual trait, not a professional expectation" (Elmore, 1996, p. 14). The implications of the capacity of this theory to deeply influence our educational system cannot be ignored. Disseminating the belief that teachers who employ exceptional practices do so solely because of dispositions inherited through their DNA would debase the profession of teaching. Therefore, all efforts toward improving teacher practices through continuous professional development would prove to be futile and unwarranted (Elmore, 1996).

Stigler and Hiebert (2008) asserted that understanding teaching as a cultural practice provides insight into the challenges expected when practitioners are presented with expectations to change. However, having this knowledge benefits our ability to improve the teaching profession. Wagner et al. (2006) believed that although there are still great disparities within the educational field regarding what constitutes good instruction, it is imperative that we include student work as valuable data in determining the effectiveness of instruction. The central focus is to evaluate what knowledge and

competencies students possess that can be attributed to the lesson taught. Furthermore, Wagner et al. (2006) suggested another key area affecting the culture of teaching and learning is that effective supervision is far too uncommon across school districts. A yearly assessment of a teacher's practice is often performed by administrators who have not been properly trained and lack clarity in assessing effective instruction. Administrators view well-managed classrooms filled with silent and obedient students as effective teaching. When performing evaluations, administrators rarely address the fundamental purpose of teaching, which is whether the students understand the lesson. This limitation in an administrator's ability to effectively help teachers improve their practice is a cultural norm that gravely affects our educational system and precludes learning.

#### Conditions

Assessment of teacher effectiveness requires supportive conditions. In discussions of adult learning, Drago-Severson (2009) supported the need for appropriate conditions to be addressed in the design of effective learning teams that include: collegial inquiry, appropriate allocation of resources, relevant data, tools and protocols for analyzing data, and being mindful of the roles and composition of the team. Wagner et al. (2006) contended that teacher-leaders should take on the role of facilitating professional development activities. This should be part of a shared planning effort and should be rigorous, conducted at schools, and specifically grounded in improving the teacher's daily instructional practices to enhance student achievement.

Students are a contributing factor in assessing teacher effectiveness. According to Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2011), identifying what



makes an effective teacher is highly subjective, even "under ideal conditions". In addition, "even when the model includes controls for prior achievement and student demographic variables, teachers are advantaged or disadvantaged based on the students they teach" (pp. 6–7).

Another perspective is offered. Elmore (1996) suggested that perhaps there are two different reasons that contribute to the lack of engaging teaching that exists. One reason might be that we are unsuccessful at choosing and compensating educators based on their individual abilities to engage students, and another might be "that organizational conditions do not promote and sustain good teaching when it occurs" (p. 5).

### Competencies

The assessment of teacher competencies is a vital component of evaluation. Wagner et al. (2006) argued that in U.S. classrooms across the states, students are not consistently exposed to high quality teaching. Our current educational system does not attain yearly exponential growth in student achievement in elementary through high school districts. The ability to receive a high quality education has defined America; however, the U.S. educational system has been unable to provide equivalent results for all students. "In other words, we do not know how to bring 'to scale' the pockets of excellence (or even dependable competence) that have characterized our education system" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 27).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2011) found that in order for evaluation systems to be effective, evaluators must demonstrate a degree of competence evidenced in (a) being properly trained as evaluators, (b) providing multiple opportunities for observation and ongoing communication throughout the assessment process, (c) ensuring that professional

development opportunities are accessible, and (d) ensuring human resource procedures are aligned to meet legal requirements. In this vein, Elmore (1996) contended that our actions as humans are a direct result of the learning and competence we have acquired.

Elmore also pointed to Michael Fullan who reasoned that schools have failed to fundamentally change practices because they take on reform efforts that exceed their institutional and individual competence. They try to overcome these challenges by completely watering down the reform effort to meet their capacity; however, this ultimately undermines and prevents any real change from occurring. The Fullan and Miles study (as cited in Elmore, 1996) stated, “Individuals are embedded in institutional structures that provide them with incentives to act in certain ways, and they respond to these incentives by testing them against their values and their competence” (pp. 15–16). Elmore (1996) believed the design of schools plays an important role in our educational systems inability to capitalize on developing "institutional incentives" to support professional development and argued that this failure is part of a cultural belief “that successful teaching is an individual trait rather than a set of learned professional competencies acquired over the course of a career” (p. 16).

The 4 Cs, contexts, culture, conditions, and competencies, are all factors that must be examined when embarking upon the assessment of teacher evaluation systems. Numerous states have contributed to the overhaul of teacher evaluation systems by imposing mandatory guidelines for the development of new measures. The current educational climate offers a momentous opportunity to ultimately change the culture of teacher evaluation in the direction of developing systems that holistically support teaching and learning. In addition, our economy's current trajectory of advancements in

digital transformation supports the feasibility of integrating technology into teacher evaluation systems to streamline this process and better support teachers in the improvement of their practice. Furthermore, to support this position, this Change Leadership plan builds upon my previous Program Evaluation research through gathering qualitative data on how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology to streamline the process to improve teaching and learning.

## SECTION THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design Overview

This qualitative research study aimed to analyze the opinions of 82 school principals in regard to the teacher evaluation system used in their school districts. This Change Leadership plan was designed to build upon my previous research entitled “Principal Perspectives on the Current State of the Art of Teacher Evaluations: A Program Evaluation” which revealed a need to investigate how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology to streamline the process to improve teaching and learning. As a result, school principals were surveyed and asked to respond to two core questions which guided this study. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process?

With the current movement toward the development of teacher evaluation software moving into the realm of mobile technology, this research also includes an interview with Dr. Rod Berger, Vice President of Education at RANDA Solutions, a software firm serving the education sector. Berger was interviewed because of his expertise in providing direction for the training of educators, administrators, students, and families on the use of RANDA's technology tools. This interview provided insight into RANDA, which is currently using technology as the basis for its teacher evaluation system that can be transformed to fit the needs of individual school districts. According to RANDA (2012), its goal is to provide "innovative solutions for improving teacher effectiveness" (RANDA Solutions, Expertise, para. 2).

RANDA's expert team employs advanced approaches to education intelligence

collection, acquisition, management, and utilization. In collaboration with their clients, they have developed a rich understanding of how education really works so they can effectively use the right technology to educators' advantage. Their mission directs their best efforts to transform education with innovative offerings that improve teacher effectiveness (RANDA, Expertise, 2012).

### Participants

Building upon my Program Evaluation study, this study includes data from five countries, 36 states, and 78 cities. The participants included in this research study were 82 current school principals, from early childhood through high school. The schools represented in this study included 74 public schools, seven private schools, and one parochial school. The total number of students in the school buildings in this study ranged from 77 students to 3,200 students. In addition, the total number of teachers in the school buildings ranged from seven to 185 teachers. The principals were selected because they are generally required to conduct teacher evaluations as part of collective bargaining agreements. Also, included in this study is an interview which was conducted with the Vice President of Education at RANDA Solutions to learn about TOWER™, which is a system the company developed that “uses technology to simplify teacher observation, walkthroughs, evaluation and reporting requirements through collecting, aggregating and generating meaningful reports to increase the true value of observations and help inform meaningful conversations to improve teacher effectiveness” (RANDA Solutions, Tower™ Overview, 2012, para. 2).

## Data Gathering Techniques

The survey for the principals participating in the study was developed using SurveyGizmo, an online survey software and questionnaire tool. I specifically created an online Twitter account, which is a real-time information network, in advance for this research study, and this social media site was used to connect with the school principals. In addition, I followed the Twitter accounts of 363 school principals who were located all over the country. Next, I sent an individual tweet, which is a small burst of information, to all of the current school principals asking them if they would participate in filling out a short survey for principals. Also, in this tweet, I provided a link to my Teacher Evaluation Survey; this allowed the study participants to fill out the survey using a computer, tablet, an iPhone, or Android device. The first page of the survey informed the participants that the research was designed to obtain information regarding the opinions of current school principals about the teacher evaluation process. Checkboxes were included on this first page so participants could indicate whether they accept or decline to participate in this research study.

## Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected in this Change Leadership plan study were analyzed using the Open Text Analysis feature included in SurveyGizmo's online survey software program. Research participants were asked to respond to two qualitative survey questions. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? The open text responses provided by research participants in this study were divided into the following six categories: (a) App, (b) Web-based document

or program, (c) Electronic Portfolio, (d) Mobile Device, (e) Video documentation, and (f) N/A, which was used only for participants who did not answer or provide a usable response. The Open Text Analysis tool quantified and transformed the open text responses into actionable data.

## SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT LITERATURE

### Teacher Evaluation on the Home-Front

On Monday, September 10, 2012, Chicago Public School teachers began their first strike since 1987. The Chicago Teachers Union, the mayor, and the school board failed to reach an agreement on a new teacher contract that would have prevented the union from acting on a 10-day strike notice that had been issued. The teacher strike affected 350,000 students who attended Chicago Public Schools (Goodwin, 2012). The City of Chicago leaders and the union negotiated over traditional labor-management issues. The school district proposed a 16% raise over four years, and the two sides essentially agreed on establishing a longer school day. However, job security and a new teacher evaluation system remained in dispute (Goodwin, 2012).

Rothstein and Mathis (2013) contended that teacher evaluation has emerged as a prominent educational policy issue because the focus has shifted from debate over teacher compensation and the hiring and firing that once centered on traditional salary matrices and teacher observation systems, to debate and an increased focus on concrete outcome measures, particularly student test score gains. Mathis and Jackson (2008) reflected on teacher job security, "A growing type of union security in labor contracts is the no-layoff policy, or job security guarantee. Such a provision is especially important to many union workers because of all the mergers, downsizings, and job reductions taking place" (p. 540). Goodwin (2012) explained that the Chicago teachers' strike received national coverage because according to Mayor Emanuel and the local school board, the strike was over a new teacher evaluation system and completely unwarranted. However, the Chicago Teachers Union stated the issues were much deeper than an



evaluation system, although it is one of the issues they negotiated over. Mathis and Jackson (2008) asserted that “cooperation between management and labor unions offers a useful route if organizations are to compete effectively in a global economy” (p. 544).

The 2012 Chicago teachers’ strike is a local example of how teacher evaluation systems are becoming a focus of debate. However, on the national and global level, much more experimentation with teacher evaluation is occurring as a result of the movement away from merely defining teacher quality as the possession of a credential or certification and toward consideration of student achievement. Stewart (2013) explained, members of the education community are joining together in dialogue to contribute to the discussion and research on defining teacher quality. However, as they engaged in this process they have come to understand, “that teacher quality has multiple components, including student growth, professional practice, and contributions to the school, profession, and community. Many critical questions remain, including how to build the research needed to connect teaching practice to student learning and growth” (p. 9).

The New Teacher Project (TNTP, 2010) suggested that educational reform has long been the agenda for school communities across the country. Momentum surrounding teacher evaluations as the cornerstone of this platform has led to an increased merger between politics and education. The bipartisan effort on behalf of legislators and educators attempts to tackle the complexities of reforming teacher evaluations. This process is accomplished “through legislation and by negotiating changes to collective bargaining agreements” (The New Teacher Project [TNTP], 2010, p. 1). However, TNTP reported the need for putting together an accountability system that exceeds the current expectations set by previous failed attempts at educational reform

and requires both parties to address the following questions: "How can we help all teachers reach their full potential in the classroom? How can we ensure that teachers love their jobs, so that the best teachers want to keep teaching? How can we address consistently ineffective teaching fairly but decisively?" (TNTP, 2010, p. 1).

### The Power of Professional Development

Conversations around best practice methods for supporting teachers' professional development carry a consensus among educational leaders on establishing professional norms for creating environments that nurture this cultural paradigm. Fundamental practices include all teachers engaging in frequent feedback throughout the evaluation process. Evaluations should be the building blocks for developing instructional teams and assessing the ability of school leaders to support teachers' growth and development. The entire school community collectively shares in the responsibility for ensuring that all students successfully graduate and are on the path to realizing their potential (TNTP, 2010).

Models of teacher growth are based on various assumptions and expectations about how teacher growth can be supported and enhanced. For example, Drago-Severson (2009) pointed out some differences, including, the methods used to improve the quality of teaching each carry a different "underlying assumption". The traditional method of evaluation such as, direct observation conveys the message that the evaluator's assessment brings about reform. "However, when the individually guided or self-directed professional development model is employed, the underlying assumption is that adults are capable of judging their own learning needs; adults learn best when they are agents of their own development" (p. 21).

Brown and Moffett (1999) stated, "The challenge of contemporary education is to regain a sense of shared purpose and to recognize, all over again, the power of the learning process in transforming lives" (p.18). According to TNTP (2010), the aforementioned expectations placed upon evaluations traditionally do not measure up and only provide vague interpretations of a teacher's performance. Secretary of State Arne Duncan (as cited in TNTP, 2010) expressed a similar thought: "Our system of teacher evaluation . . . frustrates teachers who feel that their good work goes unrecognized and ignores other teachers who would benefit from additional support" (p. 1).

Increasing expectations on the role of school principals today pose a great threat toward the continuity of leadership and the sustainability of individuals within this profession. Drago-Severson (2009) explained the expectation is for principals to serve as instructional leaders who can skillfully craft successful organizational cultures. They operate under less than ideal circumstances, which requires a resonant leader. Drago-Severson (2009) made the further assessment that the principal's added responsibility to be the central designer and leader of adult learning communities often has not been supported by their professional preparation. The present educational climate offers a momentous opportunity to ultimately change the trajectory of teacher evaluations in the direction toward developing systems that will holistically support all school communities. Drago-Severson (2009) argued for the learning-oriented model of school leadership and stated, "The four pillar practices—establishing teams, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring—can support effective, differentiated approaches to adult development in schools" (p. 14).

Many schools around the nation have already begun the work of dismantling

current evaluation systems spurred on by the federal Race to the Top initiative. This competition for federal dollars has also brought together teachers' unions who are also pitching in to support these efforts. According to TNTP (2010), the following questions surrounding this topic still loom for teacher evaluators:

How can they avoid the pitfalls of past evaluation systems? How can they create evaluations that become useful tools for teachers and school leaders, and that help push students to new heights? What can they learn from the districts and states that are making real progress? (p. 1)

Kuczynski-Brown (2012) pointed out that the Center for American Progress published a report analyzing evaluation reform efforts of "six early adopter states, including Colorado, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Tennessee" (para. 1). Despite the varying degree among states to support the development of new evaluation systems there are some state departments of education that have made real progress. However, Kuczynski-Brown (2012) also indicated that the results from the reform efforts of early adopter states revealed significant challenges in designing new teacher evaluation models. Included in these challenges are disparities regarding the degree to which states should be involved in educational matters which directly influence the progress of implementing new teacher evaluations. In addition, there is a wide range of approaches among states to adopting evaluations that align with their educational goals and vision. States that failed to secure federal funding for evaluation reform have faced additional setbacks with allocating resources during tough economic times (Kuczynski-Brown, 2012).

Critical to the reform efforts are the guidelines set by states surrounding the

training of evaluators. There are vast differences in the guidelines adopted by states to fulfill this obligation. "Some state education agencies like Tennessee directly train all evaluators, while others such as Colorado and Pennsylvania have adopted a train-the-trainer model. Some states, including New Jersey leave the training entirely up to districts" (Kuczynski-Brown, 2012, para. 6). Kuczynski-Brown acknowledged that legislation around impending timelines established by states for the implementation of new teacher evaluation systems have brought on hardships in meeting these deadlines. Additionally, a valid argument raised in the debate over the use of standardized test scores in mandated teacher evaluation systems "is that the majority of teachers do not teach in tested subjects or grades, which would make a system based on this criteria inequitable for teachers that do" (Kuczynski-Brown, 2012, para. 8).

According to Elmore (2004), "Performance-based accountability may have a powerful political logic behind it, but it has no causal theory that would explain how applying increased scrutiny to performance will in fact lead people in schools to do their work more effectively" (p. 221). Kuczynski-Brown (2012) offered some recommendations to assist in this often contentious debate. In moving forward, there is a growing need for explicitly defined roles of state education departments and their involvement in school districts. This includes the reallocation of staff and resources to support the development of new evaluation systems. Additionally, states should tailor their implementation timelines to address the concerns of their specific state and focus their efforts on providing fundamental support that school districts are unable to provide. Finally, authentic reform requires states to put together plans that comprehensively support evaluators and "address the current human-capital challenges affiliated with

teacher evaluation reform" (Kuczynski-Brown, 2012, para. 11).

### An International Look

Stewart (2011) reported on the current movement in many states to develop new teacher evaluation systems. In the United States, this is viewed as one of the most pressing issues that has challenged our educational system. To support this effort, the U.S. Department of Education is addressing this issue by developing a platform to encourage and aid states with financial incentives to improve teaching and learning across the country. "The experiences of other high-performing countries suggest that to effectively improve student achievement, appraisal needs to be carried out in the context of more comprehensive approaches to teacher recruitment, training, and development" (Stewart, 2011, p. 20).

As we work to improve our educational system, we look globally at countries that are making great progress to gain a broader perspective of the metrics needed for change. According to Stewart (2011), without exception, Singapore is a country most revered for its advancements in education and particularly, for their model of teacher development. Singapore has successfully risen as a global leader in education. In academia, educators are selected from the top percentile of their class. Financial incentives are also given during the preparation process. They also offer competitive salaries and extended yearly professional development and training provided to all educators. A structured system for career advancement is also provided for teachers. Singapore's comprehensive education system is a streamlined model consisting of evaluation, compensation, professional development, and advancement. To further highlight the distinctions of this model from traditional teacher evaluations, Stewart (2011) contended that Singapore's teacher

evaluation model was developed using the following holistic approach to appraisal:

[The model] is devised at the national level but implemented and customized at the school level. It assesses key competencies, including 1) the role of teachers in the academic and character development of their students; 2) the pedagogic initiatives and innovations teachers have developed; 3) the professional development they have undertaken; 4) their contribution to their colleagues and the school; and 5) their relationship to community organizations and to parents. (p. 17)

Additionally, in Singapore, evaluating teachers is structured using a collaborative approach including a network of educational professionals within the school. The model is classified by broad outcomes and standards piloted, developed, and periodically revised in partnership with teachers (Stewart, 2011). Open communication around improving teaching practices is fostered through regular dialogue between teachers and supervisors. Professional development plans are developed by teachers and reviewed periodically throughout the school year. "Opportunities for advancement through its three career tracks (master teacher, curriculum specialist, and principal) and a rich array of professional development options are considered an integral part of the approach to teacher excellence" (Stewart, 2011, p. 18). Although this process of teacher development is tedious, it is worth it because "it takes a lot of effort to get people into the profession, and developing a competent teacher is seen as a lifelong undertaking" (Stewart, 2011, p. 18).

Under Singapore's Ministry of Education framework, principals are held accountable and evaluated on their ability to develop teachers, implement a clearly

defined school vision, and their ability to lead the school community toward accomplishing set goals.

Teacher evaluation models vary broadly across countries "from structured, government-mandated performance-management systems like Singapore's to school-based systems relying on self- and peer-appraisal, like Finland's" (Stewart, 2011, p. 19). Darling-Hammond (2013) added that Finland is looked to as a model for school improvement because "it has one of the strongest initial teacher education systems in the world. There is relatively little emphasis in Finland on formal on-the-job evaluation, and much more emphasis on collaboration among professionals to promote student learning" (p. 3).

Similarly, Denmark's system is less structured and built on the philosophy that educational leaders should be in classrooms regularly having dialogue with teachers around instruction. In the Canadian province of Ontario, evaluations are not tied to compensation as is the case in Singapore, but the model was developed by teachers and principals and it assesses teachers on 16 competencies. All teachers complete annual learning plans; however, novice teachers are evaluated biannually and veteran teachers once every five years (Stewart, 2011). In Norway, the concept of team teaching is expressed by a group of teachers sharing the same students. In Japan, a collaborative model is used to improve teacher performance. However, due to previous failed attempts, Poland is currently working on "school-level evaluation" prior to designing a new teacher evaluation model (Stewart, 2011, p. 19). There is a growing consensus among stakeholders that poorly designed teacher evaluation systems can end up doing more harm to the profession than good. "There is a need to be cautious about using



student assessment on a narrow range of outcomes as the sole basis for measuring teacher competency" (Stewart, 2011, p. 19).

In general, the difference between higher-performing and lower-performing countries seems to lie in the effectiveness of reform implementation and the linkage of all the different reform efforts into a system. The challenge for very many countries is to move from pockets of excellence to effective systems (Stewart, 2012, p. 11). Leveling the borders and boundaries across nations allows us to focus our lens on supporting the globalization and growth of education as a profession worldwide.

#### The Role of Technology: It's More Than a Tool

On October 2, 2012, Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced that in order to be a global contender among countries that have blazed the trail for educational innovation, the U.S. must move swiftly toward adopting digital learning environments or risk broadening the learning gap between ourselves and countries such as South Korea that are widely seen as educational powerhouses (Weinrich, 2012). Although, students educated today were born into this technological era and instinctively embrace its ever-changing advancements, many adults find this pace too difficult to keep up with and they fail to explore its possibilities. Stewart (2012) highlighted the following positions, which surfaced at the International Teaching Summit. Some educators are increasingly concerned about how the rapid advancements in technology are growing at a pace that is furthering the divide between them and their students. The expectations of integrating technology into various areas of the learning environment have surfaced some uncertainties about their knowledge, skills, and ability to implement these growing changes. However, other educators believe too much attention is being placed on having

technological skills. They are also skeptical about the publicized benefits of including technology into the learning environment. They favor traditional methods of teaching and learning and "see technology as just a tool" (p. 10).

According to Nielsen (2012), although the access of technology is important, understanding how to use it to advance educational goals is of greater concern to schools than one-to-one mobile device initiatives. During Microsoft's Global Forum in Prague, Anthony Salcito, Vice President of Education, explained to participants "that an education initiative should never have technology as the primary focus. Instead, it should focus on learners. When that happens, the real work of purposeful and meaningful learning can take place" (Nielsen, 2012, para. 2).

The use of video in education is not a new concept; however, recent technological advancements with how we capture, store, edit, review and share videos have significantly evolved as a credible means for supporting teaching and learning. According to Stigler and Hiebert (2008), technology has the potential to shape how we gain and transmit information about teaching. The expected advantages include, "examples of classroom lessons linked to evolving theoretical understanding of teaching. In addition, video provides us with a unique way of gathering information we need to examine our current practices and then improve upon them" (p. 165).

Given the current impact of digital transformation in our society, investigating ways in which technology can support teaching and learning is an important investment. As Dixon (2012) explained, the speed and scale of advancements with mobile devices increasingly capable of serving an array of functions is unprecedented. Now complete with wireless technology, mobile devices are "a camera, a mobile library, a video player,

and a [global] communication device" all in one (p. 166).

In our increasingly networked culture, technology has completely transformed our time-management, organization, communication and productivity skills. Dixon (2012) contended that despite the emerging research investigating ways to effectively integrate technology into areas of education, this has not slowed the advancement or experimentation of technology taken place in this area. Dixon (2012) further illustrated this point, the small software programs called "applications" or "apps" loaded onto mobile phones have completely changed this once solely communication device. In addition, this new industry has leveled the playing field between novice and expert developers. "What once required a master's degree in computer science and an entire team of engineers can now be designed by a high school student on his or her laptop" (pp. 167–168).

Educational consultant and author Jeff Utecht (2011) posed the questions: "Is Technology a tool? Yes. Is it JUST a tool? No" (para. 2). Utecht reasoned that holding on to the philosophy that technology is just a tool allows educators to remain in pockets of silos with doors shut for fear of exploring foreign territory. Utecht (2011) argued, "if we call technology a skill . . . then a skill is something we need to teach, something that needs to be learned. If we call technology a tool then it's just something we use" (para. 3). However, the technology skills we should teach should not simply be programmatic but rather "skills of organization, of building research systems, and meta-cognition. Skills that go beyond the tools and deep into the learning process"(Utecht, 2011, para. 15).

In education, we often speak about the achievement gap, the learning gap, and in

this research, the teaching gap. However, according to Mourshed, Farrell, and Barton (2012), research conducted by the McKinsey Center for Government (MCG) revealed that in our current economy, through "recognizing the twin crises of a shortage of jobs and a shortage of skills," there is another gap that needs to be solved at the sector level, which is "the skills gap" (p. 16). Their survey data highlighted the fact that; "there is a wide gap between the perspectives of employers and education providers on the competence of new hires. The difference is particularly stark in theoretical and hands-on training, problem solving, and computer literacy" (Mourshed et al., 2012, p. 37).

The research of Mourshed et al. (2012) surfaced the stark paradox that exists between the skills students possess versus the skills they lack as assessed by educators and employers. The preparation skills required for graduates to meet the demands and needs of a changing job market are often an area of debate. According to Mourshed et al. (2012) survey "42 percent of employers [responded], employees hired in the past year [were] adequately prepared by their pre-hire education; 72 percent of providers [responded], graduates from my institution [were] adequately prepared for entry-level positions in their chosen field of study" (pp. 36, 39).

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) developed National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for students. The standards were designed "for evaluating the skills and knowledge students need to learn effectively and live productively in an increasingly global and digital world" (International Society for Technology in Education [ISTE], 2012, para. 1). ISTE maintained that simply being able to use technology is no longer enough. Today's students need to be able to use technology to analyze, learn, and explore. Digital age skills are vital for preparing

students to work, live, and contribute to the social and civic fabric of their communities (ISTE, 2012). In regard to this challenge, Brown and Moffett (1999) raised an important question, "Of all the economic dichotomies in education, perhaps the most challenging is the use of educational technology. How can we ensure that all students master the competencies required for success in a change-dominated, technology-driven world?" (p. 15).

In the U.S. and around the world, there is no shortage of educational reform strategies or models. The key lies in the implementation of these efforts; if we continue to hold onto standardized test scores as the primary criterion for assessing teacher performance, we will in fact produce the same results. We do not lack pedagogical scholars or educational best practices; but we do lack the ability to let go of past failed attempts, and with each new effort, they are somehow woven into the fabric we call transformation. According to John Dewey (as cited in West, 2011), "If we teach today's students, as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow" (p. 1).

## SECTION FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

This Change Leadership plan was designed to build upon my Program Evaluation research study, which revealed a need to investigate how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology to streamline the process to improve teaching and learning. This qualitative research study aimed to analyze the opinions of current school principals in regard to the teacher evaluation system used in their school districts. To gain further insight into this, school principals were surveyed and asked to respond to two core questions. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process?

### Principal Perspectives

Based upon my Program Evaluation research, I determined that there may be a need to investigate how to use technology to streamline the teacher evaluation process. The data gathered in that study revealed that approximately 70% of the principals surveyed indicated technology is not used as part of their teacher evaluation system. Given that high statistic, it became important to explore and analyze the data gleaned from the remaining 30% of participants who did use technology in teacher evaluation.

Seventeen participants out of the 30% who indicated technology is used as part of their teacher evaluation system responded to the question: How is technology used as part of your teacher evaluation system? Using the Open Text Analysis report, the responses provided by research participants in this Change Leadership plan were divided into the following five categories: (a) App, (b) Web-based document or program, (c) Electronic Portfolio, (d) Mobile Device, and (e) Video documentation. The data revealed that

approximately 65% of the 17 participants indicated they use a Web-based document or program including McREL, Eduphoria, and Google docs; 35% use a Mobile Device such as the iPad; approximately 18% use an App such as Evernote; 12% indicated they use Video documentation; and 6% use an Electronic Portfolio as part of their teacher evaluation system (see Appendix A). As teacher evaluations become digital, questions concerning mobility, device selection, software applications, data tracking and storage capabilities, reporting results and feedback, and electronic methods used for supporting growth and professional development are some of the conversations that should be included in this discussion. Next, 82 participants responded openly to the question: How could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? Using the Open Text Analysis report, the responses provided by research participants were divided into the following six categories: (a) App, (b) Web-based document or program, (c) Electronic Portfolio, (d) Mobile Device, (e) Video documentation, and (f) N/A, which was used only for participants who did not answer or provide a usable response. The data for this qualitative research question revealed that approximately 60% of the principals surveyed indicated a Web-based document or program such as McREL, Eduphoria, or Google docs would help streamline the teacher evaluation process; 28% indicated a Mobile Device such as the iPad; approximately 16% suggested Video documentation; 12% indicated an App such as Evernote and GoObserve; approximately 9% stated an Electronic Portfolio; and roughly 20% of participants were categorized as N/A because they did not answer or provide a usable response (see Appendix B). New thinking about the important role technology can assume with teacher evaluations will require schools to be open about learning ways technology can support this process.

## Interview With Vice President of Education at RANDA

Within the context of this research study, I also interviewed Rod Berger, the Vice President of Education at RANDA Solutions, because of his expertise in providing direction for the training of educators, administrators, students, and families on the use of RANDA's technology tools. RANDA's expert team employs advanced approaches to education intelligence collection, acquisition, management and utilization. In collaboration with their clients, they have developed a rich understanding of how education really works so they can effectively use the right technology to educators' advantage. Their mission directs their best efforts to transform education with innovative offerings that improve teacher effectiveness (RANDA, 2012). In the interview with Berger, we discussed two core research questions. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? In my interview with Berger, he explained:

There is a real problem in education today with too much data coming from too many sources and being moved around in too many different formats. One of our specialties is to gather up all that data from different assessments, logistics, scanning, and other vendors and aggregate it into one place so we can give clients a way to make sense out of it. Our development team has worked hard to bring together all this disparate information in a way that can be used to make decisions that will improve student performance. Teacher observations, evaluations, and classroom walkthroughs are a great big pain, involving a lot of time, and a burdensome amount of paperwork. And usually, once that paperwork is done, it



gets put in a file cabinet and is forgotten. Once again, our development team has wrangled some complicated technology to create a simple solution to the problem: Put the observation process on an iPad, and when you're done with a walkthrough or evaluation, tap a button and the results are sent to a data warehouse where that data can be used to analyze what is going on in our schools and classrooms. This allows teacher evaluations to mean so much more than they have in the past, simply by making access to the data easier to deal with.

Berger went on to discuss how there is a trend across school districts and states to increase the number of teacher evaluations and have them tied to tenure status and merit pay. Technology's role is to help streamline the process, put administrators in a more active role while observing teachers, take out the need for paper, and cut down on the time it takes to analyze the data, communicate, and give feedback to teachers regarding their evaluations. Therefore, given the rapid pace of change, school communities should continually engage in technology-focused discussions about trends, advancements, and creating structures to integrate technology into the teacher evaluation process as a strategy to support teaching and learning.

## SECTION SIX: A VISION OF SUCCESS TO BE

Creating a new vision of how to change the structure of our educational system so that it meets the needs of learners today and develops ideas for tomorrow is the prerequisite for transformation. Brown and Moffett (1999) further explained this concept and posed the following argument:

What are we committed to discovering about ourselves, both individually and collectively, and about how to make schools heroic as learning organizations? Our vision quest extends from our search for common standards and values. It also surfaces in our growing acceptance of the reality that untested theories, one-size-fits-all programs, and bureaucratic mandates cannot "save" us. We experience the pull of the vision quest whenever we struggle to make standards come alive in practice—whether content, performance, teaching, or professional development standards. The quest lives whenever educators re-examine the purpose of education in the face of public cynicism and pessimism about its current status as a social institution. We go on a vision quest whenever we commit to transforming the professional culture of our schools. (pp. 82–83)

The vision of transforming the way teachers are evaluated by integrating technology represents a micro-level initiative, which has implications for changing the structure of our educational system on a macro-level. Brown and Moffett (1999) believed, "Vision is an act of faith, in the midst of the doubt that surrounds us, that we can imagine and create a better future for children" (p. 85).

Current platforms analyzing the latest educational trends such as the Khan Academy, the flipped classroom, grants on investing in innovation, learning about

Singapore's world renowned education system as well as researching teacher evaluations and the current technology being used are helping to realize this vision. According to Wagner et al. (2006), "Your system—any system—is perfectly designed to produce the results you're getting" (p. 105). All of these approaches address the fundamental questions of learning, which are: How do students learn? How should we treat students? How should subject matter be organized? What knowledge is of most worth? How should we assess what students understand? How should we teach?

The idea that technology is more than a tool, but rather a fundamentally important skill that needs to be taught to all students to effectively compete and survive in a highly technological and global environment is what Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) described as an adaptive challenge which is cultural and requires more time to diagnose, and even then there are no quick fixes. However, Brown and Moffett (1999) stated, "The quest we embark on will be fraught with tests of our own ability to act with discipline, stay the course, deal with others, and combat our tendency toward self-doubt and discouragement" (p. 86).

Uncovering the assumptions regarding technology being the key to streamlining the teacher evaluation process is what Heifetz et al. (2009) would describe as the importance of diagnosing the problem and mobilizing the system towards change. Although, as we move forward and push past obstacles that are often conceived in our minds, this season is almost always met with discomfort and trials (Brown & Moffett, 1999). According to Brown and Moffett, "One of the biggest trials and tests is the isolation of the person with the vision by people who have made peace with the status quo" (p. 91). However, despite these explanations, Brown and Moffett (1999) asserted,

challenging conditions in education are the motivation leading our search to develop new organizational cultures that meet all of our needs.

My pedagogical thinking has been transformed through this research, and I have learned two profound lessons. The first lesson is that teaching is learning; the second lesson is that learning often occurs outside of classrooms. I have come to believe that as a country, if we continue to fund schools based on the number of minutes a student sits at a desk and evaluate teachers on measures that cannot improve their practice, we can agree that despite the current platform for redesigning our education system, there is no real expectation for change. However, if we support the idea that technology is more than a tool, that it is a skill that needs to be invested in and learned, this idea has the capacity to change the educational trajectory of America.

## SECTION SEVEN: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

The purpose behind this research study was to shift the educational current from developing teacher evaluations that are heavily submerged in test scores and direct it toward paradigms that merge cutting-edge technology with research-based instructional strategies that streamline the training and implementation process for teachers and administrators. The goals of this current qualitative study were to answer two core questions. How is technology being used within current teacher evaluation systems? Within current teacher evaluation systems, how could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? Also, investigate how teacher evaluation systems could be transformed by integrating technology into the process to improve teaching and learning. Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009) seemed to support this shift in thinking when they observed, “A teacher’s effectiveness—the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement—is not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision-making in any meaningful way” (p. 3).

New teacher evaluation models should aim to change the “core of educational practice” which Elmore (1996) described as “how teachers understand the nature of knowledge and the student’s role in learning, and how these ideas about knowledge and learning are manifested in teaching and classwork” (p. 2). The core of educational practice also includes the concrete structures within schools that encompass the physical design of classrooms, student grouping practices and teachers’ responsibilities related to student groups, the relations among teachers in their work with students, and student learning assessment processes as well as the methods employed to communicate assessment results to students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other interested

parties (Elmore, 1996, p. 2). Therefore, when designing new teacher evaluation systems these are competencies, which Elmore (1996) believes should be included.

As teachers develop as practitioners within a culture of increasing expectations, it is important for new evaluation models to support this process and reflect an alignment with the beliefs, norms, and assumptions about teaching and learning (Drago-Severson, 2009). In addition, teaching quality should also be assessed in the context of the school community (Stewart, 2013). This can be accomplished through analyzing school policies, procedures, and resources and how they affect the contexts, culture, conditions, and competencies that were identified by Wagner et al. (2006). "Unfortunately, given the patchwork of policies, the plethora of competing decision makers, and fragmented design of factory-model schools, these conditions are not present in many, perhaps most, U.S. schools" (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2008, p. 4).

However, Wagner et al. (2006) offered an alternative approach with their position on rigor, relevance, and relationships; these areas are often missed on individual and school evaluations, but they contribute significantly to student achievement. Wagner et al. (2006) detailed this alternative approach through a series of relational questions:

Students attending urban, suburban, or rural high schools; students who struggle academically; and students who take advanced courses all say the one thing that makes the greatest difference in their learning is the quality of their relationships with their teachers. They want teachers who care about teaching and who are challenging and competent, of course, but what they talk about most often is how they are treated by their teachers. Does the teacher see them as individuals, rather than just faces in the crowd? Does the teacher try to know and understand what

students may be dealing with at home or in their neighborhood? To what extent does a teacher go out of his or her way to ensure that all students are learning versus just plowing through the chapters? Or does the teacher only pay attention to the "smart" kids? It is increasingly clear to us that, although many of today's students may have diminished fear and respect for formal authority, they have an increased need to connect with adults who can guide and coach them in school and in life. (pp. 41–42)

My vision of success includes, no desk in rows, no 45-minute class periods, no hall sweep music, no warnings to remove a hat or put a cell phone away. Instead, students would work in small groups and develop solutions to real world problems. Teachers would serve as mentors and not lecturers. There would be no formal student code of conduct with a consequence for each infraction. Students would decide what qualities they want to be known for, such as, intelligent, responsible, resilient, observant, innovative, respectful, humble and motivated. Everyone plays an important part and if the student is not meeting the expectation, their team would hold them accountable. In this environment everyone shares the belief that students can do real important work. This means they will be given an authentic project-based challenging curriculum, built on student interests using hands on projects. The entire curriculum would be based on this question, "What do we want students to know and be able to do"? It would also mean adults foster strong relationships, which forms the basis of everything. It would be an environment that students and adults want to come too.

Most educational reform efforts have been focused on improving student learning and they do little to largely affect teaching practices (Elmore, 1996, p. 6). As an

example, the Common Core is the new national educational reform effort of our time; it includes a completely new set of standards that will be used to teach and assess all students. However, we must address how to fundamentally transform teaching practices to ensure the success of this reform effort, or any reform effort that follows.

Teacher evaluation models should be designed as comprehensive systems having a holistic approach to teacher development and a grounding in research on adult learning (Drago-Severson, 2009). Marzano (2012) defined comprehensive teacher evaluations as "[a] model [that] includes all those elements that research has identified as associated with student achievement" (para. 6).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2011) acknowledged that current research also supports teacher evaluation models that integrate, primarily for veteran teachers, the guidelines established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the guidelines of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), which developed a revised modified version of the NBPTS for beginning teachers that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The Five Core Propositions developed by NBPTS are used to certify teachers as Nationally Board Certified and include the following:

- Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning.
- Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.
- Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.
- Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and



Learn from Experience.

- Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities. (NBPTS, 2014, para. 3)

Specific roles should be developed within the context of professional learning communities that support teachers as leaders. Drago-Severson (2009) affirmed the framework developed by Harrison and Killon (2007) detailing the leadership roles that teachers assume. These ten roles include: (a) Resource provider, (b) Instructional specialist, (c) Curriculum specialist, (d) Data coach, (e) Classroom supporter, (f) Learning facilitator, (g) Mentor, (h) Instructional leader, (i) Catalyst for change, and (j) Ongoing learner (p. 110). Additional roles that I recommend be developed to support teachers as leaders based on their areas of expertise include: (a) Thought partners—who provide support with reflecting on the life of a teacher; (b) Critical friends—these are skeptical reformists who need to have a role in the community to help support their development and they can be paired with thought partners; (c) Relationship experts—experts on social-emotional development and mental health who address all relational concerns that develop within the context of school communities such as student-teacher, teacher-teacher, student-student, teacher-parent; and (d) Technology specialists—this role is to research and provide instructional learning and resources for integrating technology into pedagogy.

Drago-Severson (2009) subscribed to Michael Fullan's (2008) position, that principals must serve as instructional leaders and create a climate of collaboration and continuous improvement. "Fullan advocates developing school systems as professional learning communities where leadership is shared because these contexts are more

effective than those where individuals work in isolation" (p. 110). In addition, Drago-Severson's (2009) research on adult learning surfaced the question: "What is the principal's role in creating pathways for sharing leadership and conditions for building capacity?" (p. 106) and summarized the answer to this question, analyzing the position put forth by Donaldson (2007), the greatest expression of leadership in schools, is visible in the authenticity of their relationships. "Leadership, according to Donaldson, is a particular type of relationship—that mobilizes other people to improve practice. Working together, it is possible to improve the quality of our relationships, fulfill a school's mission, and carefully examine and improve instruction" (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 107).

Currently, our educational climate's commitment toward improving teaching and learning is tied to our ability to develop teacher evaluation systems that holistically support teachers' growth and development as professional practitioners. Therefore, it is important that the models we develop during this time reflect a vision that supports the belief that teachers develop best in environments which promote individual and collegial professional learning. Hence, increased pressure within school communities advocating accountability without support is a formula for frustration and failure.

When designing a technology based teacher evaluation system this Change Leadership plan identified multiple ways to use technology to streamline the teacher evaluation process. Some of these ways are: (a) web-based documents and programs including online software such as McREL, Eduphoria, and Google docs that can be used for walkthroughs and observations; (b) mobile devices such as the iPad to easily and accessibly organize, create, and transmit information; (c) video documentation for

professional development and self-evaluation; (d) mobile applications such as Evernote and GoObserve to enhance the use of mobile devices with evaluations; and (e) electronic portfolios. All of these things can be used to support documentation, professional development, and provide timely feedback to teachers. In conclusion, expanding our beliefs about teaching and learning by exploring innovative ways technology can support this process, and experimenting with new models and modalities of instructional delivery and professional development can serve as a powerful leverage for advancing education for future generations.

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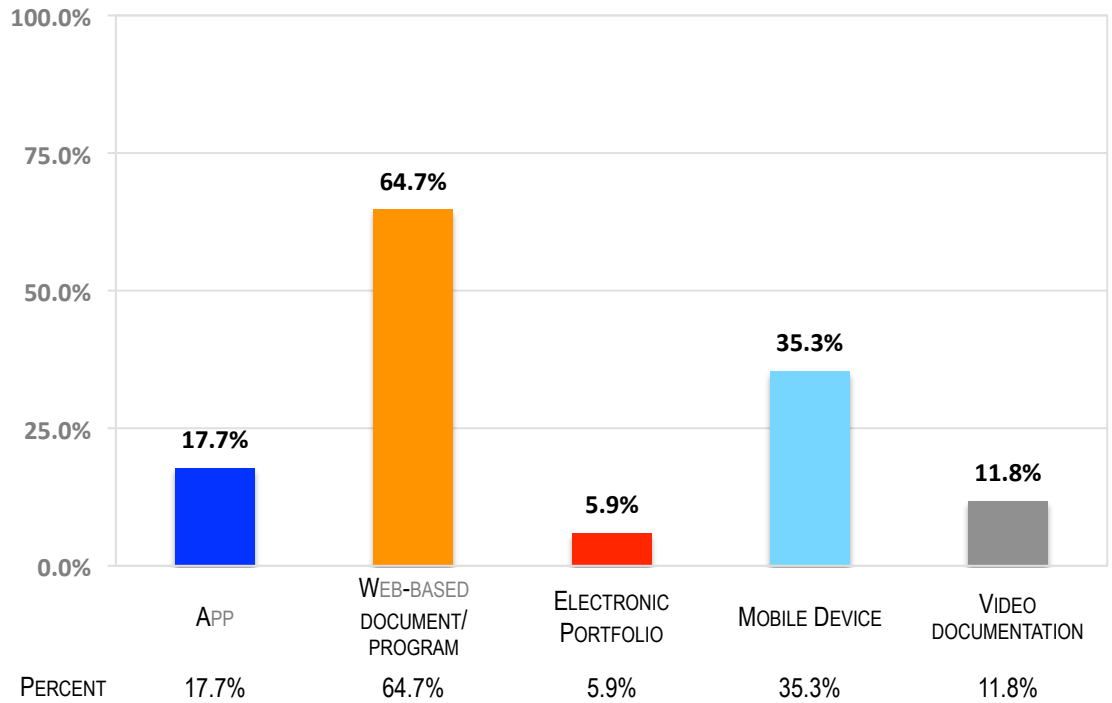
## APPENDIX A

### Open Text Analysis Report 1

Survey: Teacher Evaluation Survey – Change Leadership Plan

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Is technology used as part of your teacher evaluation system? (e.g., video-taped classroom observations, Internet-based teacher evaluation program, etc.)—Text Analysis



Value	Count	Percent
App	3	17.7%
Web-based document/program	11	64.7%
Electronic Portfolio	1	5.9%
Mobile Device	6	35.3%
Video documentation	2	11.8%

#### Statistics

Total Responses

17

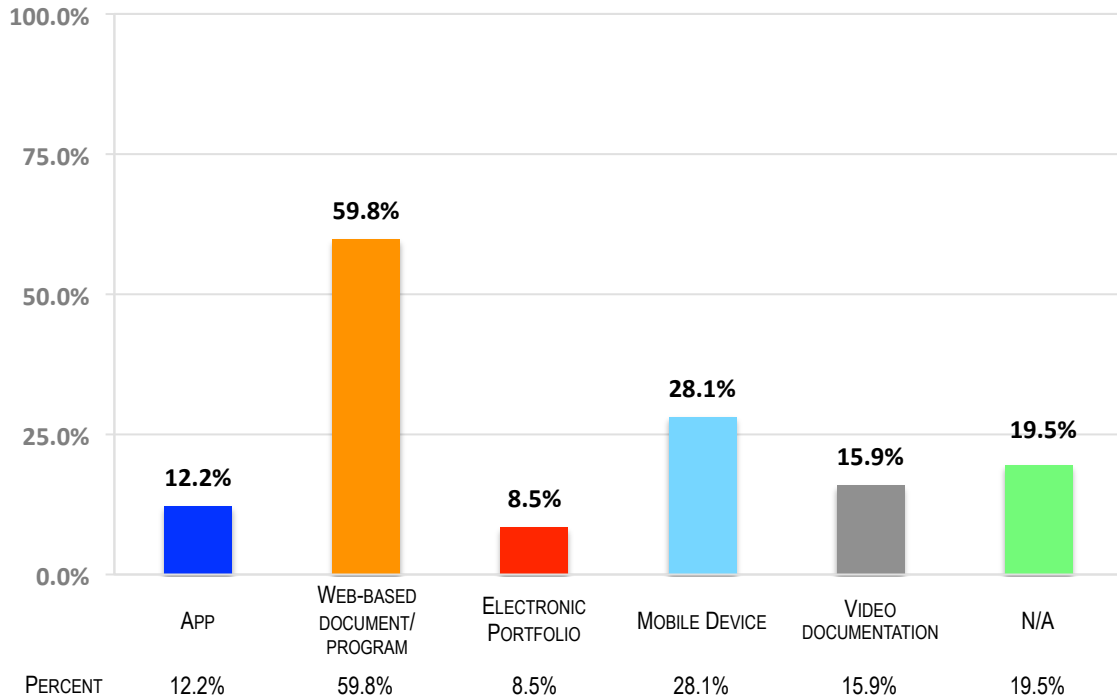


## APPENDIX B

### Open Text Analysis Report 2

Survey: Teacher Evaluation Survey – Change Leadership Plan

#### How could technology be used to streamline the teacher evaluation process? —Text Analysis



Value	Count	Percent
App	10	12.2%
Web-based document/program	49	59.8%
Electronic Portfolio	7	8.5%
Mobile Device	23	28.1%
Video documentation	13	15.9%
N/A	16	19.5%

#### Statistics

Total Responses

82