

# Public School Press

MAY 2013

## City Doubles Down on Teacher Training

*Historic Changes Coming to Classrooms*

CITY FUNDS FOR  
TEACHER SUPPORT  
TOP \$100 MILLION

### *Pivotal Moment for Students*

New York's public schools will get a boost of support from hundreds of coaches this fall. But instead of hitting the basketball courts, they're headed to classrooms.

Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott has set in motion a major push to improve the skills of the city's teachers. He announced he will double the city's investment in teacher support to more than \$100 million.

The coaches' goal will be to train principals and others to observe teachers in action, pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses and help them improve.

The focus on teaching is a response to the Common Core standards, which have raised the bar for school kids, and a 2010 state law that overhauled an outdated teacher evaluation system. The new system, which goes into effect

this September, will introduce historic changes to how teachers are assessed and trained.

"It's a new era in our public schools," the Chancellor said. "We're expecting more from our students and their teachers."

The Department of Education's investment of more than \$100 million

is intended to ensure that teachers and students will be ready to meet these new challenges.

"We can't expect to raise standards for students without doing the same for teachers," Walcott said. "It's especially urgent in wake of the Common Core, the most dramatic change to education in our lifetime."





## Straight Talk from the Chancellor

*Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott responds to parents' questions*

### How is my child going to benefit from this new teacher evaluation system?

Teachers will be encouraged to learn from their peers, collaborate, share ideas, and brainstorm to identify new ways to engage children.

We're raising standards for our kids through the Common Core, and we need to raise the bar for teaching and institute accountability. Next year you'll see more support in our schools to make sure our teachers are encouraging your child to learn at his or her full potential.

### Why do I hear so much about accountability? What does it mean?

We want to improve the quality of teaching throughout the public school system. Teachers are one of the most important influences on a child's life. If your child's teacher is struggling, we need to know so we can support him or her.

### What's wrong with the current system? Why change it?

The teacher evaluation system simply doesn't work. We need a better way to measure performance so that principals can give specific support to their teachers and students.

When it comes to our students, we're always evaluating how they're performing, where they're excelling and where they need help. It's time we do the same for teachers.

Currently, they are rated either Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. But we

all know there aren't just good or bad teachers—some are excellent, some great, some average, and some in need of improvement. The new evaluation system allows principals to form a more concrete picture of how their teachers handle student behavior, encourage class discussion, and more.

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We're putting our money where our mouth is by doubling our investment in professional development

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### Are teachers going to be ready for the new evaluation system? What are you doing to prepare them?

Our schools help students tackle tough subjects, and we're prepared to help your child's teacher tackle the evaluation system.

We're putting our money where our mouth is by doubling our investment in professional development to over \$100 million. We're providing training for our teachers through a partnership with The Danielson Group, an organization that supports teacher development and evaluation in districts throughout the country.

We've also updated our citywide instructional expectations to give teachers specific guidance on what we want to see in a classroom and to help schools set clear goals for teachers. Over 250 schools piloted the new evaluation system so that we could better understand what works and what doesn't.

A lot of other resources are being developed online, like webinars, videos, articles, and interactive tools for teachers to use, as well as a help desk for educators who have questions about the new evaluation system. We're here to listen to any concerns they have.

I'm committed to making sure your child's teacher is a great one. We're all in this together.



# It Works!

That was the overwhelming opinion of teachers and principals who were part of the first wave of educators to receive intensified coaching.

Over 8,500 teachers took part in a study that was designed to prepare the city for the new teacher evaluation law, which spells out some of the most dramatic teaching reforms in New York history.

Soon, all 75,000 teachers in the city's public school system will experience the new and more

personalized approach to instruction.

In the study, teachers received one-on-one feedback from principals and were coached to improve. Schools

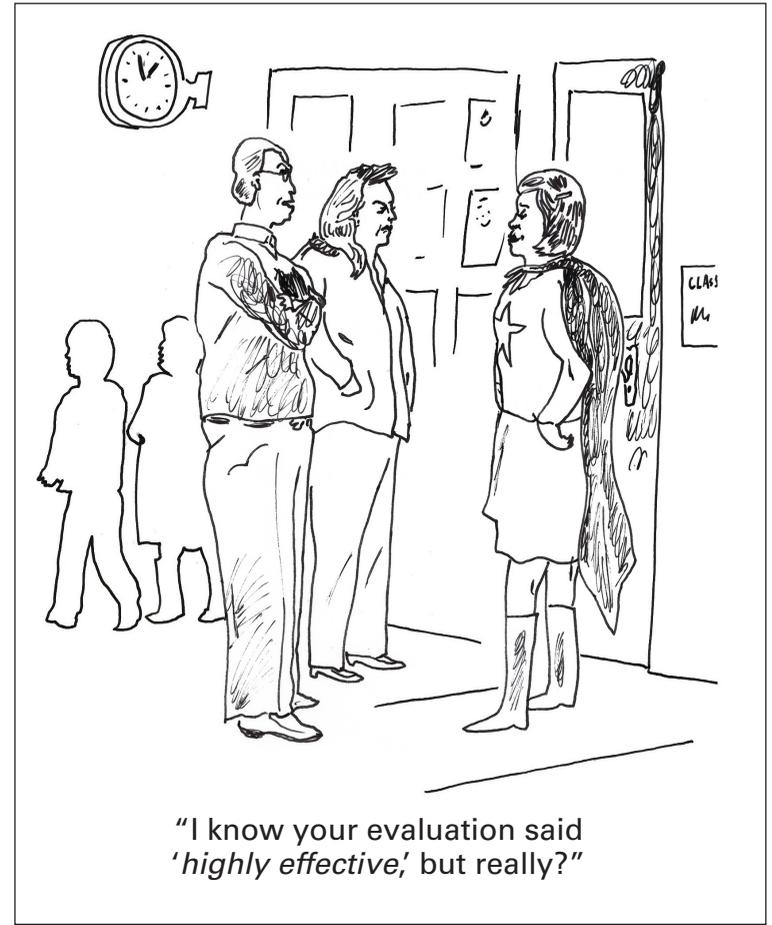
**Coaching brought the skills of teachers and principals to new heights.**

also piloted a new, no-stakes evaluation scale that rated teachers as Ineffective, Developing,

Effective, or Highly Effective. This more detailed system was compared to the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory evaluation method.

Scoring showed that the coaching brought the skills of teachers and principals to new heights.

Janine Meyer, a seventh-grade teacher, was encouraged by the new coaching. "It's about what's best for the kids, and if I'm not asking them the right questions, if I'm not challenging



them enough, then I want to know," she said.

One principal in Brooklyn,

Cynthia Fowlkes, praised the new approach. "Going into the classroom and giving that

meaningful, frequent feedback to teachers really drives high-quality instruction," she said.

## Out With the Old, in With the New



**94%**

of principals believed they could better identify their best teachers under the new evaluation system.



**84%**

of principals said the new teacher evaluation system improved their students' performance.

\*2012 NYC Research Study. Survey based on net percent of school leaders' responses to Pilot Evaluation & Development Model.

## What is the Teacher Evaluation Law?

Across America, parents are demanding better schools and better instruction. President Obama created his Race to the Top program as a result.

In May 2010, New York State passed Education Law 3012-c as part of its participation in Race to the Top. It requires every school district in the state—including New York City—to develop a better way to evaluate teachers and principals.

The state regulations discard the old pass/fail system for assessing teachers and replace it with a more detailed system that uses clear criteria to rate teachers into four categories—Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective. The city has spent the past two years preparing for the implementation of this law, which will debut this September.

# This Year We're Aiming Higher

This year, state exams for students in grades 3-8 have been different and more challenging. And test scores will reflect that at first.

We're raising standards. Under the new Common Core curriculum, students will be writing more. Thinking critically. Defending their ideas. Working in teams to solve real-world problems.

We're not satisfied with just teaching your children basic skills. We want them prepared for college and a career.



**Search NYC.gov  
for Common Core  
Parent Resources  
for more information.**