

Sample Op-Ed

Hope Street Group's pilot project in Policy 2.0 brought together a team of educators and other professionals to develop recommendations for improving teacher evaluation systems. Their work resulted in the report, "Policy 2.0: Using Open Innovation to Reform Teacher Evaluation Systems." Become an agent for change by promoting the team's work in your community.

Note: Op-Eds are written to give an opinion on a key issue. They can be authored by one person, or sometimes are authored by two people. They do not have to be in response to a specific article, but they usually relate to a pressing issue of the day. Check with your newspaper about specific rules, but generally op-eds are limited to 500-750 words.

Research shows that the majority of teacher evaluation systems in this country result in nearly all teachers being rated as satisfactory, despite the fact that many schools are not meeting federal benchmarks for success. These systems fail to identify excellence and are rarely linked to opportunities to support teachers who are struggling. Further, administrators are rarely trained to conduct robust evaluations, nor are principals held accountable for the poor results of current systems.

This is the case in our school district. [share personal observations about weak and/or strong points of your evaluation system and why the conversation is relevant to your community today]

There is now a window of opportunity to improve these systems. As a country, we spend \$400 billion a year on teachers' salaries and benefits, but we do not really know how they are doing or how we can help them do better. Our President is asking states to step up and make meaningful change a reality for our students by implementing reforms that include the development of better teacher evaluation systems.. Now is the time to ensure that our nation is maximizing its investment in the teaching workforce, creating opportunities for constructive feedback and targeting professional development to teachers who can improve. [If possible, respond to local or national chatter about education or especially evaluations—perhaps a bill moving through state legislature.]

For the past several months, I have been working with Hope Street Group, a national non-profit organization working on education reform, to develop recommendations for improving these evaluation systems. Hope Street Group convened a team of professionals, including 22 K-12 educators like myself, to talk through the issues associated with teacher evaluations. The resulting report, "Policy 2.0: Using Open Innovation to Reform Teacher Evaluation Systems," (available online at www.hopestreetwork.org) calls for rigorous evaluations that include objective measures of student achievement, coupled with clearly defined