



UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE
AUDITOR GENERAL

A Performance Audit of Teacher and Principal Performance

RYAN THELIN

LEAD AUDITOR
APRIL 20, 2022

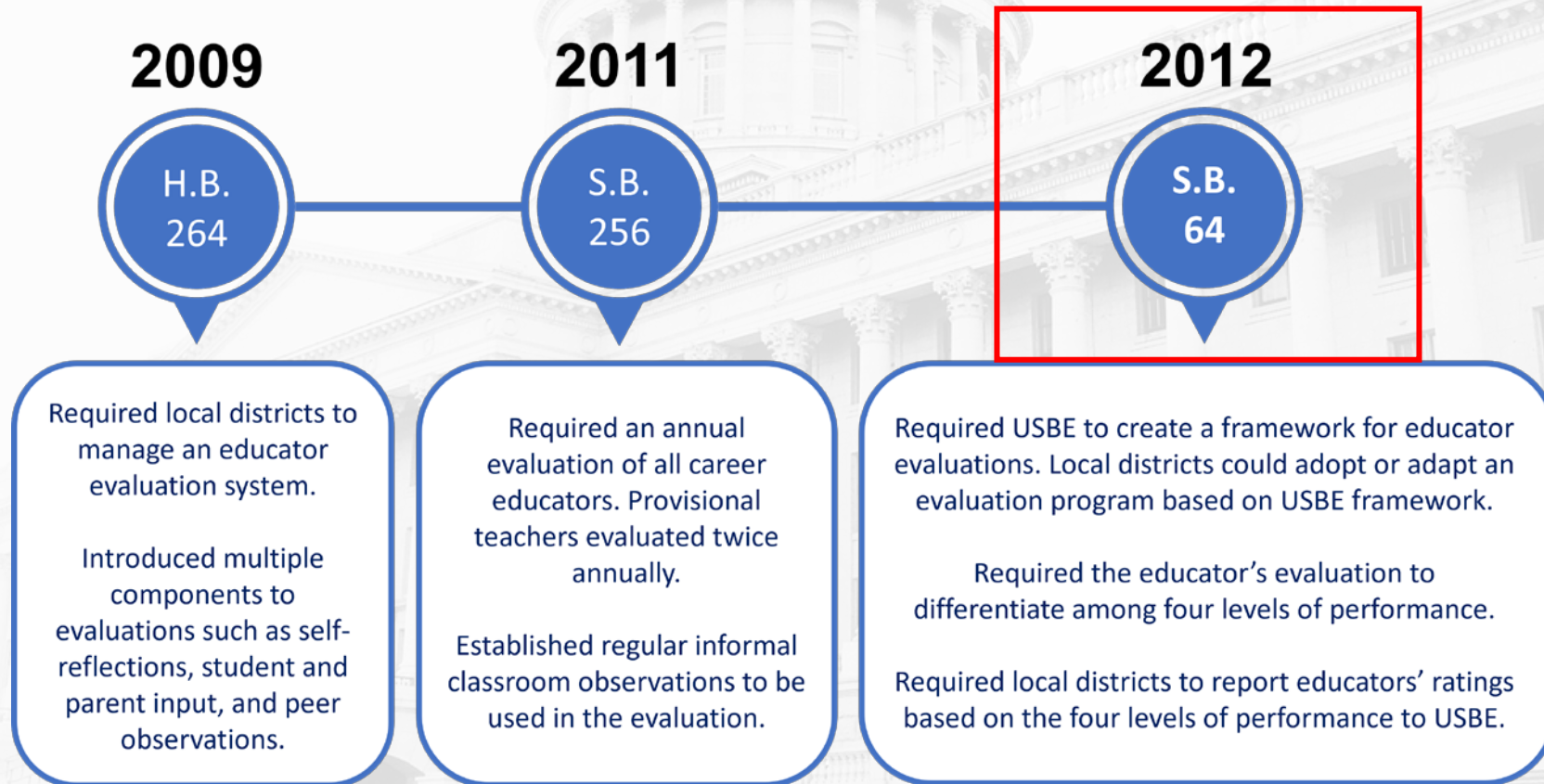


Chapter I

Introduction

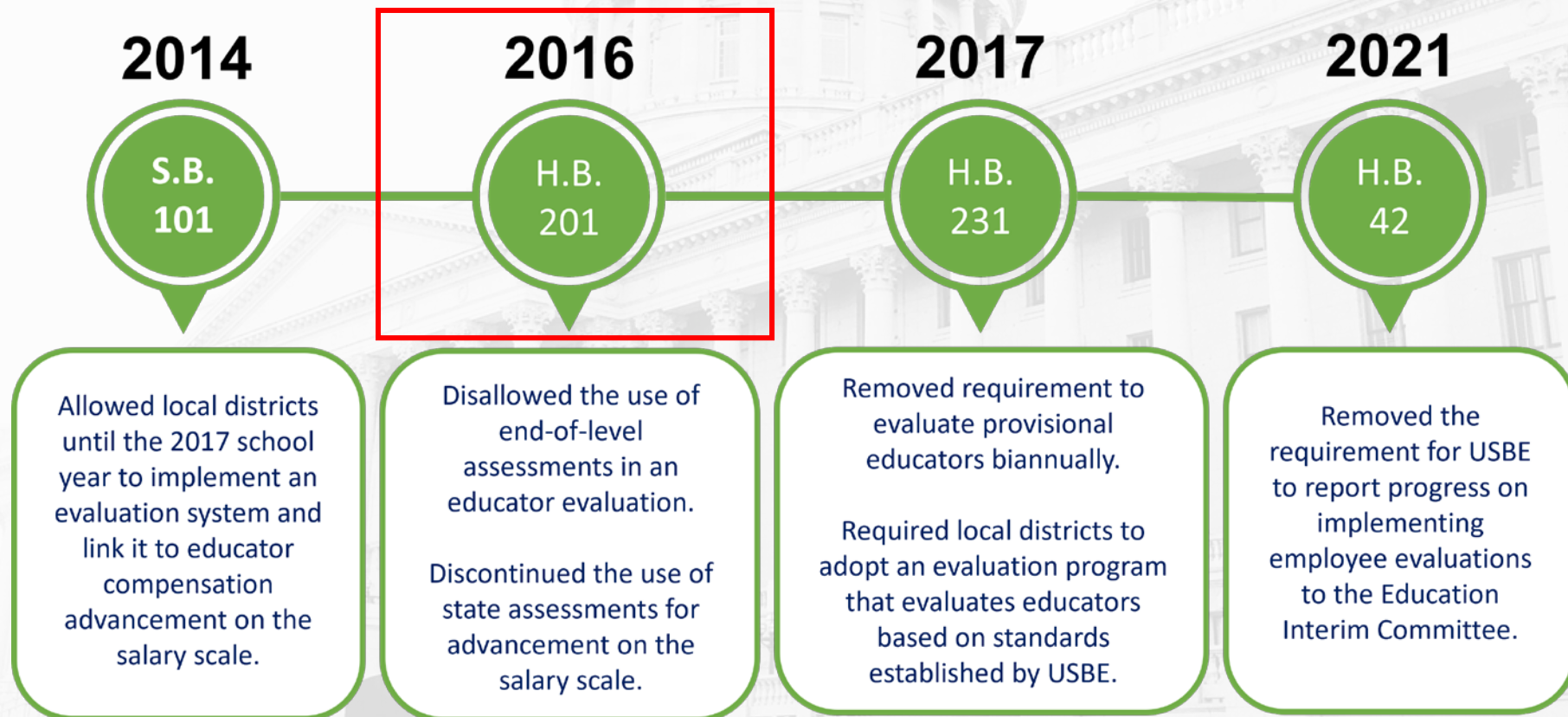


Utah's Educator Evaluation System Is the Result of Multiple Legislative Changes





The Current Evaluation System Allows More District Flexibility





Chapter II

Teacher Evaluation Ratings Lack Meaning and the System Inadequately Addresses Overall Instructional Improvement



Principals Use Most Evaluation Systems as an Employment Tool

The effectiveness of public educators can be improved and enhanced by providing specific feedback and support for improvement through a systematic, fair, and competent annual evaluation

Remediation of public educators whose performance is inadequate.



Used Mainly as an Employment Tool

15 of 33

Used as a Checkbox for Compliance

13 of 33

Partially Used as an Improvement Tool

6 of 33

Used Mainly as an Improvement Tool

4 of 33



Most Career Teachers Are Fully Evaluated Only Once Every Three Years

Utah Code defines a summative evaluation as

“...the annual evaluation that summarizes an educator’s performance during a school year...”

In Practice

Most districts conduct a summative evaluation for career teachers once every three years which results in an effectiveness rating.

- **3 – Highly Effective**
- **2 – Effective**
- **1 – Emerging/minimally effective**
- **0 – Not effective**

The years between summative reviews are known as formative evaluations and do not result in a teacher effectiveness rating.

Teacher Evaluation Scores Are not Comparable across Districts

District A

Observations:
Career educators are observed **once every 3 years.**

Stakeholder Input:
Teacher can provide evidence they are meeting teaching standards.

Teacher receives a score of "3."

District B

Observations:
Career educators are observed a **minimum of 3 times each year.**

Stakeholder Input:
Teacher will receive feedback from student and parent surveys.

Teacher receives a score of "3."





Chapter III

Best Practices can Improve Teacher Evaluations and Focus on Improvement for All Teachers



The Legislature and USBE Could Collaborate to Require an Annual Evaluation that Includes Best Practices

Practices required of principals every three years for summative evaluations

Observation rubrics with multiple indicators and standards.

Collecting evidence and conducting conferences with teachers to inform a rating.

Compiling rating data to report to districts and USBE.

Practices used by some principals every year outside of summative evaluations

Self-created observation rubrics focused on targeted improvement areas.

Multiple, short observations beyond district policy to witness classroom instruction.

Informal feedback and relationship building to improve trust and culture.

Combining the 3-year summative evaluation with formative practices conducted by principals into an annual evaluation could improve all teacher performance.

Annual Summative Review with Combined Elements

Annual summative reviews can contain multiple observations, targeted standards for growth, and immediate feedback.



Multiple, Annual Observations for All Teachers is Considered Best Practice



91% of the principals interviewed wanted to be in the classroom more

IDAHO



Requires a minimum of two observations annually

ARIZONA



Requires a minimum of two classroom observations

NEW MEXICO



Requires one formal observation and two informal walk-throughs to support teachers

COLORADO



Requires at least one observation annually

Policymakers Should Consider the Appropriate Role of Student Growth to Factor into Teacher Evaluations



No weight for student growth

Districts have autonomy to determine use in evaluations

IDAHO



No weight for student growth. It may be calculated using current or previous year data.

NEW MEXICO



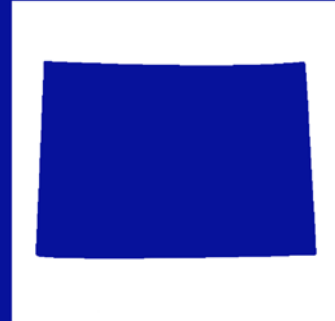
No weight for student growth. Teacher must demonstrate state-adopted competencies.

ARIZONA



Student growth weight can range between 20% to 33% of evaluations.

COLORADO



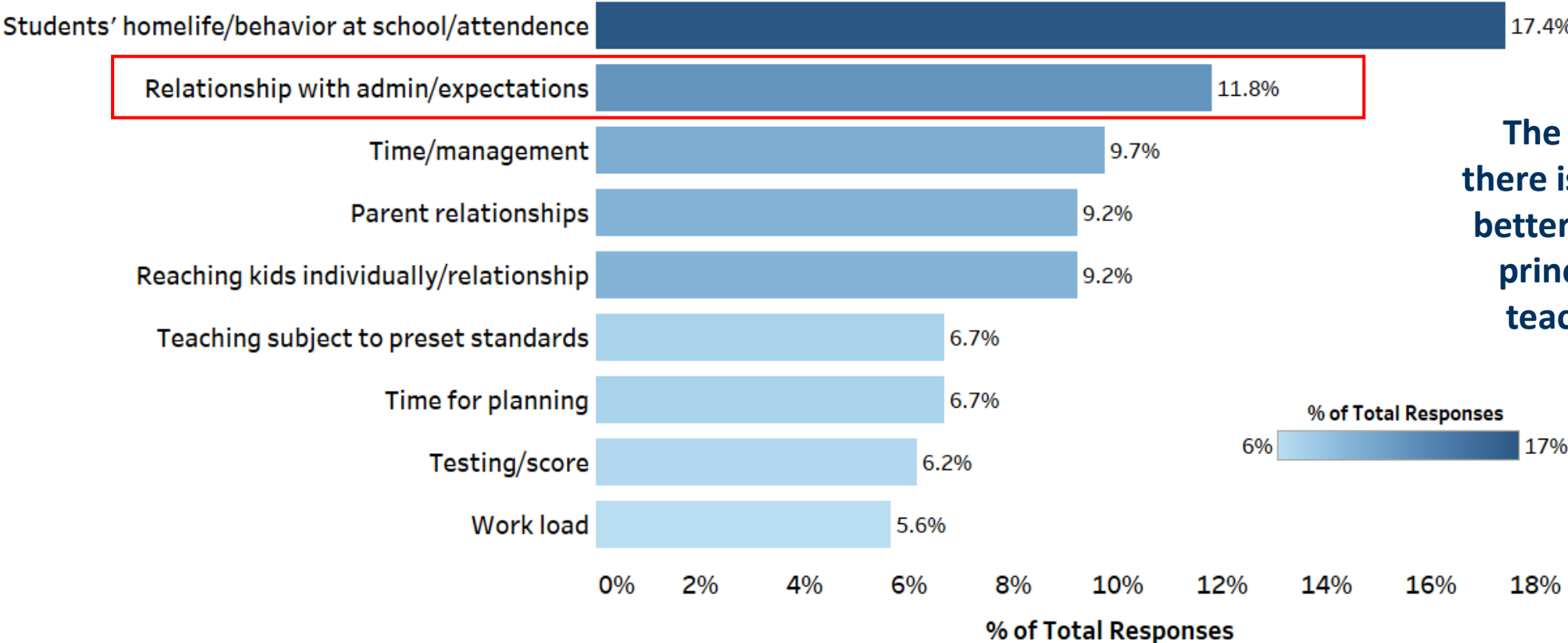
Student growth weight is 50% of evaluations.*



Chapter IV

Improving Principal Preparedness and Performance Has the Potential to Elevate Public Education

School Principals Have an Outsized Impact on Teacher and Student Performance



The audit noted that there is an opportunity to better train and educate principals to improve teacher satisfaction.



Principal Preparation Pipeline

Collaboration between the Legislature, USBE, local districts, and higher education can improve principal effectiveness.

UTAH LEGISLATURE

Create an administrator-specific evaluation law

Provide support for professional development programs within a potential principal pipeline

USBE

Create a principal evaluation framework or frameworks for districts to utilize

Consider a tiered administrator licensure to include provisional licenses for new school administrators

LOCAL DISTRICTS

Implement and maintain high-quality principal evaluations

Provide strong mentorship and coaching opportunities for school leaders

HIGHER EDUCATION

Educate aspiring principals to state standards and licensing requirements

Support USBE by providing longer internship programs for in-field experience and connecting interns to district leadership

A Lack of Clarity in Evaluation Law Results in Uncertainty about Principal Evaluations



Utah Evaluation Code 53G-11-507

A local school board...shall adopt a reliable and valid educator evaluation program that evaluates educators based on educator professional standards established by the state board and includes:

(b) Use of multiple lines of evidence, including:

(i) self-evaluation;

(ii) student and parent input;

(iii) for an administrator, employee input;

(iv) a reasonable number of supervisor observations to ensure adequate reliability;

(v) evidence of professional growth and other indicator of instructional improvement

based on educator professional standards established by the state board; and

(vi) student academic growth data;

- a summative evaluation that differentiates among four levels of performance

- For an administrator, the effectiveness of evaluating employee performance in a school or school district for which the administrator has responsibility.

The Legislature can collaborate with USBE to create a principal-specific evaluation code with unique criteria for school administrators.

Current Principal Evaluation Practices Rarely Provide Value to School Administrators



District 1

Elementary
Principal

Does not know how principal evaluations work in the district. Has a discussion with the supervisor at the end of the year.

District 2

Elementary
Principal

District will email asking for professional goals. No formal discussion or evaluation provided.

District 3

Elementary
Principal

Meets with district supervisor at the end of the year to discuss goals. More of an informal discussion than an official evaluation.

USBE can support districts with an evaluation framework for stronger evaluations to enhance principal effectiveness.

Questions?



UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE
AUDITOR GENERAL