

# Evaluations that consider school resources could fairly assess teacher performance

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The evaluation of public school teachers is a topic addressed regularly by voters and policymakers around the country. Researchers at the University of Missouri have identified a plan to evaluate teachers fairly using a "proportional" system. Cory Koedel, an associate professor of economics and public policy in the MU College of Arts and Science and the Truman School of Public Affairs, says that proportionality would level the playing field among teachers who work with students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

"One of the biggest criticisms of proposed teacher evaluations is that teachers in less wealthy districts with fewer resources will be unfairly evaluated in relation to teachers with access to more resources," Koedel said. "By leveling the playing field among all teachers, we can mitigate this issue."

In a study that has been accepted for publication in *Educational Policy*, Koedel, along with University of Missouri co-authors Mark Ehlert, Eric Parsons and Michael Podgursky, examined three types of evaluation plans and concluded that a "proportional" plan is the most effective and equitable solution. Koedel also says that a proportional system would encourage all teachers to reach their full potential when teaching their students.

"Based on evidence from past research in economics, we know that if teachers who teach in disadvantaged districts know that they have little chance of being recognized for their good work, they will be less

motivated," Koedel said. "Also, teachers at wealthier schools may also be less motivated if they know that they have a good chance of receiving positive reviews based only on where they work. Giving all [teachers](#) an equal opportunity to be recognized as effective or ineffective would increase effort throughout the workforce, which would be a win for students in K-12 schools."

**More information:** Koedel wrote a policy brief for the Institute of Public Policy at the MU Truman School of Public Affairs with suggestions for policymakers interested in teacher evaluations. That brief can be read here: [ipp.missouri.edu/wp-content/up ... cy-Brief-11-2014.pdf](http://ipp.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/cy-Brief-11-2014.pdf).

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