



Myth vs. Fact: The Truth about Reform

Modernizing Teacher Evaluations, Tenure and Compensation for the 21st Century

Myth: The current process for evaluating teachers is fine the way it is.

Fact: Last year, 99.7% of teachers in the state earned a “satisfactory” evaluation, yet 50% of our high school students, 35% of our middle school students and 30% of our elementary students didn’t make a year’s worth of progress in reading. (And 60%, 40% and 30%, respectively, were not reading on grade level.) That’s fine?

Myth: The bill will eliminate tenure in Florida.

Fact: The bill doesn’t eliminate tenure for teachers in the classroom today. The courts have determined that tenure is a property right and can’t be taken away by the Legislature. The bill does end the practice of granting lifetime guarantee of employment after just three years in the classroom. Instead, new teachers will have annual performance contracts.

Myth: Annual tests are not a good measure of teacher effectiveness.

Fact: Annual tests are an objective measure of the knowledge and skills students gain from one year to the next. If you believe teachers impact how much a student learns, then annual tests that measure progress are an objective measure of their effectiveness in the classroom.

Myth: It’s unfair to base teacher evaluations on student learning.

Fact: Right now, teacher performance reviews are based on the observations and opinions of their principal – making these evaluations 100% subjective. Using data for 50% of the annual performance review makes the evaluation more objective – and therefore, *more fair*.

Myth: The bill punishes teachers whose students are below grade level.

Fact: The bill doesn't punish teachers whose students are not on grade level. The bill requires progress – what students learn during the year – to be considered. Teachers can't control what their students know when they show up on the first day of school, but they do influence what they learn during the year in their class.

In fact measuring progress may benefit teachers who teach students with disabilities and low-performing students the most.

Myth: The bill cuts teacher pay.

Fact: Under the bill, the more students learn, the more teachers earn. The bill requires at least half of teacher salaries to be based on whether students are learning. It also raises salaries for teachers in high-poverty schools and teachers of subjects that are in high demand, such as math and science.