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## Evaluating Value-Added Assessment: Findings and Recommendations from the NASBE Study Group on Value-Added Assessment

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National Association of State Boards of Education. **Evaluating Value-Added Assessment: Findings and Recommendations from the NASBE Study Group on Value-Added Assessment.** Alexandria, Va.: Author, 2005. 40 pages. *Available from:* National Association of State Boards of Education, 277 South Washington St., Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22314. \$14 plus shipping and handling. 703-684-4000; fax: 703-836-2313. Web site: [www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org). Download the executive summary (8 pages, no charge) at [www.nasbe.org/recent\\_pubs/Value%20added%20exec%20summary.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/recent_pubs/Value%20added%20exec%20summary.pdf).

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NASBE has a long history of using a study group approach to analyze complex issues of importance to education policy-makers and practitioners. These reports are typically comprehensive, easy to read and understand, and noteworthy in their efforts to align findings with current concerns.

While this study group's focus was on the broad issue of value-added assessment in education, considerable attention was paid to its use as it related to teacher assessment and accountability. After considering data from implemented programs such as the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), analysis by researchers, and testimony from experts, the group warned that "for a host of statistical and other reasons this area must be approached with considerable caution, especially in terms of high-stakes decisions such as ranking teachers, merit pay, and promotion or dismissal."

For example, many schools—especially low-income schools—have highly mobile student populations. Thus, while value-added models can exclude students who have not been with a particular teacher for the entire school year, the effect is to greatly limit the base of usable data. The study group notes:

Positive teacher effects as evidenced by higher value-added scores are not the same as teacher effectiveness. For example, is one teacher who is good at narrowing the curriculum and teaching to the standardized test really better than another teacher who gets a lower test score but delivers a broader, richer curriculum?

Even strong supporters of value-added assessment recognize its limitations. Here is what the report summarized from a presentation by William Sanders, an authority on value-added assessment and the developer of TVAAS:

He...feels fairly confident that using his value-added model he can identify the very best and the very worst performing schools and classrooms...On the other hand, he said he is much less confident that his model can accurately detect significant performance differences among the 70 to 80 percent of teachers who fall somewhere in the middle range.

The report concludes with a recommendation that "value-added information not be used for high-stakes evaluation involving either punishment or rewards." However, it also suggests:

Value-added assessment has significant potential—when used in conjunction with other measures and supports—as a tool to improve teaching... [specifically, to] differentiate the very most and very least effective teachers and show individual teachers more precisely in which areas and with which students they

are and aren't being successful.

Resources:

[www.nctq.org/nctq/images/nctq\\_io.pdf](http://www.nctq.org/nctq/images/nctq_io.pdf)

The National Council on Teacher Quality has published a short brief, *Increasing the Odds: How Good Policies Can Yield Better Teachers*, which summarizes research on the impact of various teacher characteristics on student learning and links these findings to policy issues.