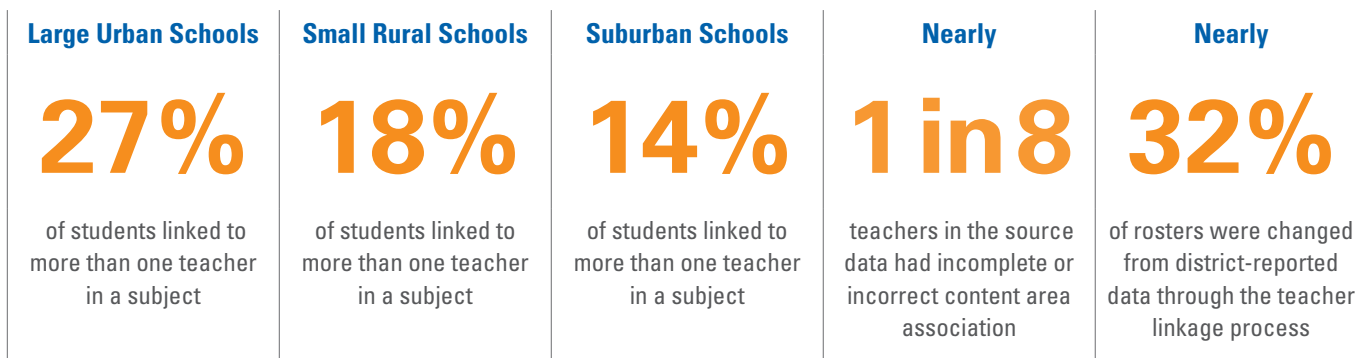


The research and data are clear—effective teachers matter. To maximize our school improvement efforts, we need accurate data to identify these highly effective teachers and understand what they do to impact student achievement. However, a major challenge and barrier to success for many states and districts is collecting data that accurately capture the complex variables that describe the relationships between teachers and students.

Discrepancies and Variation in Data

Working with hundreds of districts and thousands of schools across the country, Battelle for Kids has learned that virtually every school has required significant revisions or modifications to teaching assignments, number of students taught, the mobility of students and the instructional responsibility attributed to a single teacher. In spring 2011, more than 168,000 rosters were verified by educators in South Carolina, Texas, Ohio, Oklahoma and Georgia. Recent analyses of linkage results from schools across the country yield alarming results, including:



Variation in District-Reported Data and Teacher-Verified Linkage Data			
	Teachers Verifying Linkage Data	Misidentified Teachers Incorrectly Reported As Teaching a Subject	Missing Teachers Not Reported As Teaching a Subject
Large Urban District			
Reading	10,207	1,985	983
Math	9,638	1,545	827
Science	5,862	1,226	375
Social Studies	4,688	612	178
Suburban District			
Reading	2,924	532	334
Math	2,848	500	284
Science	1,364	283	63
Social Studies	914	204	43
Small Rural District			
Reading	1,243	247	130
Math	1,223	202	121
Science	674	149	50
Social Studies	468	85	28

Impact Associated with Inaccurate Data

Without reliable data and information, educators, policy-makers and others will make inaccurate assumptions about instructional practices and students' performance. Inaccurate or incomplete data also impact the credibility of school transformation. Stakeholders who support goals for transformation will question and doubt every decision if they even suspect there are errors in the data upon which decisions are being made. Consider the following examples:

Value-Added Information

Without accurately linked data between teachers and students, value-added reports will not provide a true picture of what's happening in the classroom because:

- The number of students included in the analysis, as reported through the teacher-student linkage process, has been proven to vary considerably and will have an impact on value-added results, especially with small class sizes (i.e., self-contained elementary or special education classes).
- Therefore, the data may reveal ineffective teachers as effective or effective teachers as ineffective by analyzing an inaccurate population of students and their test results.

Misidentification of Subjects

If teachers are not accurately associated with the subjects they taught in the data leading up to analysis, they will be associated with the wrong subject in the analysis. As a result, teachers may be recognized as effective or ineffective in subjects they did not teach or lack analysis in subjects they did teach.

Strategic Compensation

Consider the impact of using incorrect data to drive performance-pay programs for teachers and principals. With inaccurate data, it is possible for districts to:

- Reward the wrong people—ineffective teachers may be improperly rewarded or vice versa.
- Reward educators for the wrong things (i.e. rewarding a teacher in a content area a teacher never taught while not recognizing a teacher who did).

Evaluation

When using value-added information as a component of an educator's evaluation, it is imperative to have the most reliable information to ensure that teachers are not misidentified, mislabeled or mistreated due to a flawed analysis based on inaccurate data.

The Bottom Line: Involve Teachers in the Process to Obtain the Most Accurate Teacher-Student Linkages

Before any analysis of teacher effectiveness can be completed, the instructional linkage between teachers and students must be captured accurately and transparently. Therefore, the data going into the analyses must be as accurate as possible and teachers must play a role in the verification process. When teachers are involved in the process, they have more confidence in the data being used to measure their impact on students' performance.

