



T U L S A

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## An Overview of the Tulsa Model for Observation and Evaluation

It is the mission of Tulsa Public Schools to provide a quality learning experience for every student, every day, without exception. There are many ingredients to improving student achievement, but none more important than an effective teacher in every classroom. The Tulsa Model defines, measures and support effective teaching—for every school and every classroom.

**Excellence and High Expectations  
with a Commitment to All**

# The Tulsa Model



## Using the Tulsa Model, educators will be able to:

- Use a common framework and language for evaluation.
- Provide educators with clear expectations about what is being assessed, as well as standards that should be met.
- Send messages about what is most meaningful.
- Increase the consistency and objectivity in evaluating professional performances.
- Provide educators with information about where they are in relation to where they need to be for success.
- Identify instructional practices that drive student achievement.
- Give educators guidance for evaluating and improving their work.

## How the system was developed

Tulsa Public Schools knew that the teacher evaluation system must be designed with teachers, for teachers. As such, it developed the Tulsa Model in collaboration with Oklahoma educators and administrators and in consultation with national experts in teacher and leader effectiveness.

The Tulsa Model is based upon principles of continuous improvement and real-world application. The District evaluates and uses feedback from teachers and leaders to refine the system and continually improve evaluation training.

## The Research

The value of the system's framework and processes depend upon lessons learned from the field as well as rigorous, independent research. The practices within the Tulsa Model have been verified by published, peer-reviewed studies and are shown to be correlated with growth in student achievement scores<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover, the Tulsa Model itself has been validated in two separate, external studies, revealing that every indicator within the framework is positively correlated with student achievement.

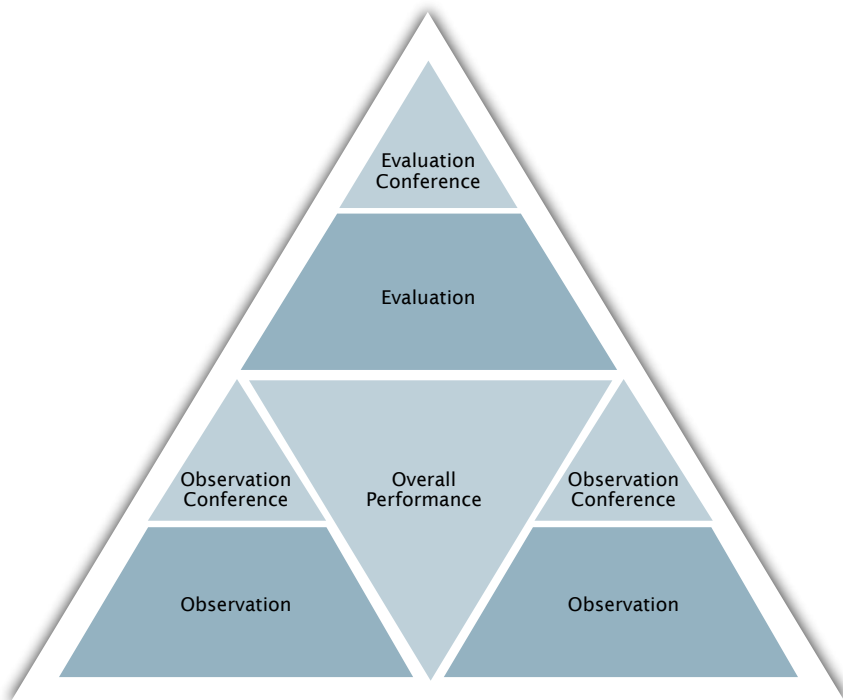
It's important for teachers to see where they are involved, and where they need to do more. This gives us the ability to improve on our strengths and on our weaknesses."

- Stefani Bartholomew,  
Tulsa "Teacher of the Year 2011"

[1] Kane, Thomas J.; Taylor, Eric S.; Tyler, John H; and Wooten, Amy L. (2011). "Identifying Effective Classroom Practices using Student Achievement Data." *The Journal of Human Resources*, 46:3; see also Kane, Taylor, Tyler and Wooten (2010). "Identifying Effective Classroom Practices Using Student Achievement Data." National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 15803; see also Cotton, Kathleen; Northwest Regional Educational Lab (2000). "The Schooling Practices that Matter Most."

## What the process entails

The The Tulsa Model is an evidence-based process of educator evaluation anchored in specific domains, dimensions and indicators reflecting national best practices and current research regarding effective instruction.



Aligned to improvement, Tulsa Public Schools included an extensive system of feedback and support as part of the Tulsa Model, including personal development plans for every teacher with an Ineffective (1) or Needs Improvement (2) rating. Personal development is not an event, but a series of ongoing and responsive training opportunities for learning, improvement and growth.

“I know exactly what I’m being measured on. I know exactly what I’m supposed to be doing. It identifies the 5 domains very clearly.”

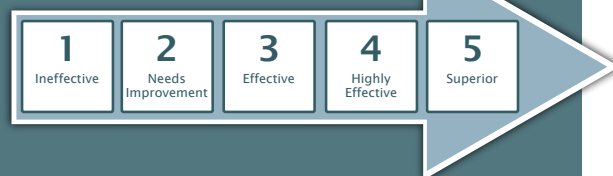
—Omar Vivar, Teacher,  
Kendall-Whittier Elementary

The Tulsa Model approaches personal development not as an event, but a series of ongoing and responsive training opportunities for learning improvement and growth.

**The Rubric:** Pursuant to State Law, the rubric and numeric scores for evaluations are based on a five-point scale. The rubric-centered Tulsa Model provides definitions of professional proficiency (effectiveness) for all 5 rankings:

- Based on research and best practices;
- Developed and improved hand-in-hand with teachers; and
- Containing 20 indicators residing within 5 domains:
  1. Classroom Management
  2. Instructional Effectiveness
  3. Professional Growth and Continuous improvement
  4. Interpersonal Skills
  5. Leadership

The rankings of N/A and N/O are used for not applicable and not observed behavior (evidence), respectively. The numeric scores represent the following rankings:



**Observation:** The observation is the intentional study and analysis of the teacher’s classroom performance to date—guided by the detailed descriptions of the rubric and recorded in the observation form, which simplifies the rubric. A minimum of two (2) observations are required before every evaluation.

**Evaluation Form:** The evaluation form offers a technology-enhanced tool that documents patterns of effectiveness according to the rubric’s definitions of professional proficiencies.

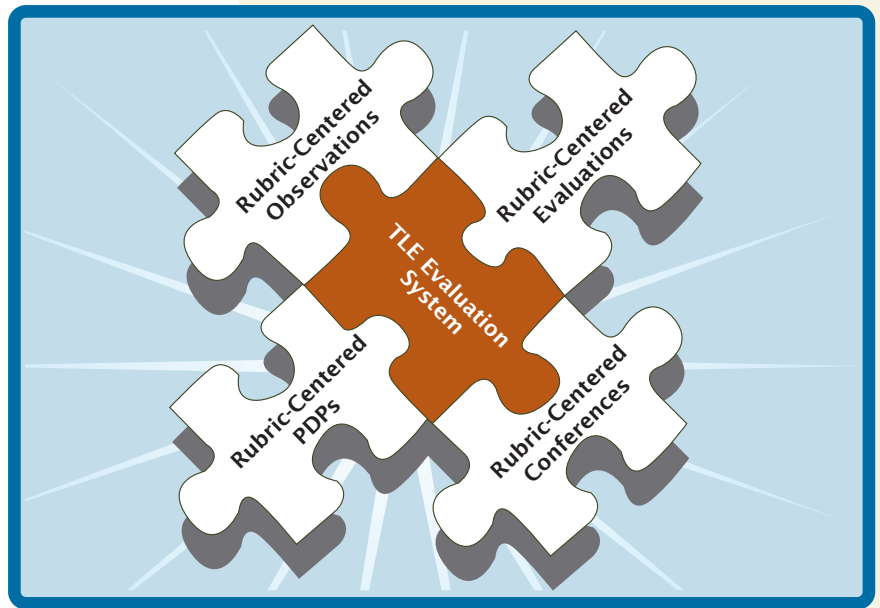
**The Conference:** Following observation and evaluation, teachers are provided with a status check and road map to improve effectiveness.

**Support:** Focuses on (1) Ineffective and (2) Needs Improvement

## Impact of the Tulsa Model

Using the Tulsa Model, Tulsa Public Schools has experienced:

- Student achievement gains
- Improvements in identifying and distinguishing levels of professional performance for both teachers and evaluators
- More support for less than effective teachers and evaluators
- Exit of ineffective teachers and evaluators
- Alignment of professional development plans and evaluation findings



## Lessons Learned

Leverage teacher and administrator input.

Improve the system based on real-world implementation.

Simplicity is best.

Train evaluators, and train them again.

Ensure inter-rater reliability and accuracy with a certification and re-certification process.

Seek, embrace and respond to teacher and evaluator input, especially regarding the decisions that impact them.

Fidelity and fortitude are important.

Develop, listen to and engage the help of community and outside resources.

“At the end of the year, after your observations, you should have a pretty good idea what your evaluation is going to look like. All the way along you’ve had that communication with the evaluator and it’s been based on measurable, observable objectives.”

–Lynn Stockley, President,  
Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association

“It gives the teachers the information they need to be able to improve their practices.”

–Stacy Vernon, Principal,  
Rogers College High

For additional information on rubrics, forms, the evaluation handbook and other materials, visit:  
**[www.tulsaschools.org](http://www.tulsaschools.org)**.