The Teacher Evaluation Landscape in Missouri (TEL-MO)

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Background

A strong teacher evaluation system can improve instructional quality by providing clear, actionable feedback that supports professional growth, highlighting effective educators, and identifying those who need improvement. It can also provide opportunities for struggling teachers to improve, while ensuring a fair and transparent process for removal if improvement does not occur. Ultimately, these mechanisms contribute to a more effective instructional workforce overall.

In Missouri, each school district either adopts the state's evaluation model, adopts an external framework that meets state requirements, or designs its own framework that meets requirements.[1] This report presents a landscape analysis of teacher evaluation models used across school districts during the post-COVID period from the 2022–23 through 2024–25 school years. It offers a descriptive overview of the evaluation models, examines their geographic distribution, and explores variation across districts operating in different contexts.

The analysis draws primarily on the annual Educator Evaluation Survey administered by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.[2] District-level characteristics from the Common Core of Data are merged to provide additional context. Although the survey is collected at the school level, results are reported at the district level because districts typically choose or design the framework, provide training and support, and incorporate the system into labor agreements. An analogous school-level is available in the Appendix.[3]

Key Findings

- Seven different teacher evaluation models are in use in Missouri districts, but four models account for nearly all adoptions.
- The NEE model is the most widely used model, especially in small and rural districts.
- City and suburban districts draw on a more diverse mix of evaluation models.
- Most evaluation models divide teachers into four or seven performance rating categories.
- Teachers are rated "effective" at consistently high levels under every model.
- Suburban districts report the highest average share of teachers rated effective; city districts report the lowest.

[1] For more information about the standards, please visit: https://dese.mo.gov/educator-quality/educator-preparation/media/pdf/teacher-standards.
[2] For more information about the Missouri educator evaluation survey, please visit: https://dese.mo.gov/educator-quality/educator-growth-toolbox/model-evaluation-system.
[3] We excluded schools or districts that do not have any teacher evaluation models, such as alternative schools, early childhood centers, juvenile justice centers, virtual academies, and special education districts.

1. Teacher Evaluation Models in Practice

Across Missouri's public school districts, seven primary teacher evaluation models are used: the Missouri Model Evaluation System (MO Model), a revised version of the Missouri Model Evaluation System (Revised MO Model), the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE), the Marzano Model, the Danielson Model, a district-created model based on Missouri Teacher and Leader Standards (MO T&L Standards), and a district-created model based on district-created standards (District Standards). The "Other" category accounts for uncategorized evaluation frameworks outside the primary categories. [4]

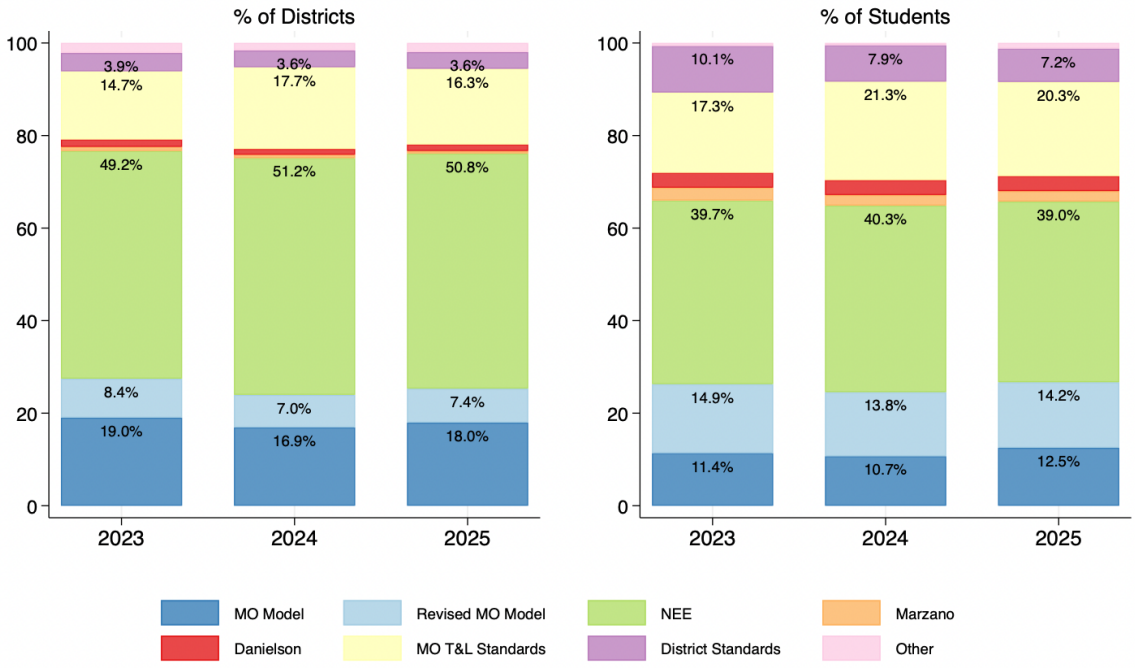

Figure 1.1 Teacher Evaluation Model Distribution in Missouri Districts, 2022-23 – 2024-25

Note. The left panel reports the percentage of districts that employ each teacher-evaluation model, whereas the right panel re-weights those percentages by district Pre-K–12 enrollment to show the share of students whose teachers are evaluated under each model.

Four models account for nearly all district choices. First, the NEE model dominates the landscape: roughly half of Missouri's districts rely on it, and those districts educate about 40 percent of the state's students. In 2025, the MO Model was used by about 18 percent of districts covering 12 percent of students. This model is preferred by smaller districts. Another 16 percent of districts employ the district-created model based on the MO T&L Standards, and these districts serve approximately 20 percent of students. Finally, the Revised MO model appears in

[4] To determine which teacher-evaluation models Missouri districts use, we began with school-level responses to the Educator Evaluation Survey. For each district, we identified the modal model—the one implemented in the greatest number of its schools—and assigned that model to the district overall. This approach captured district practice accurately because more than 95 percent of districts rely on a single evaluation model across all schools. In the rare cases where two models tied for the modal position, one was selected at random to represent the district.

about 7 percent of districts yet reaches 14 percent of students, indicating that it is more common in larger districts.

From 2022–23 to 2024–25, there was little change in the use of the different teacher evaluation models, which is unsurprising.

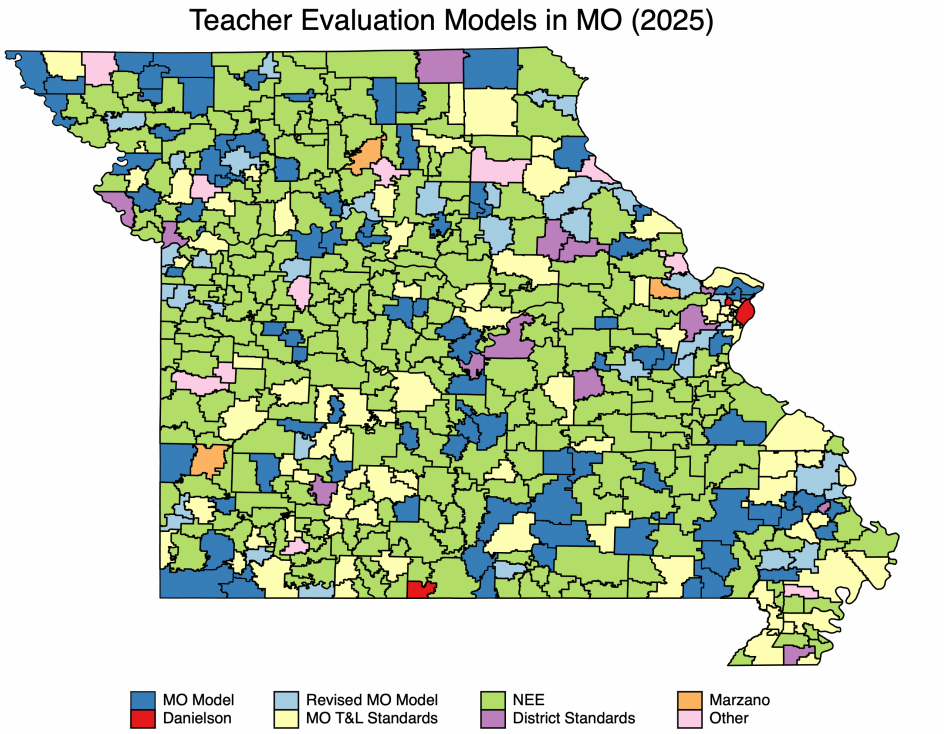

Figure 1.2. Geographic Distribution of Teacher Evaluation Models in Missouri School Districts (2024-25)

Figure 1.2 shows the geographic distribution of the teacher evaluation models in use during the 2024-25 school year. Consistent with Figure 1.1, the NEE model is the most widespread and blankets most of rural central, southern, and southwestern Missouri. The original MO Model also has substantial presence statewide with notable clusters in northern Missouri and pockets throughout the central and southeastern regions. The MO T&L Standards is concentrated more heavily in the northern half of the state, while the Revised MO Model appears with a slight lean toward eastern and northeastern districts. The remaining models occupy much smaller geographic footprints and tend to cluster near urban centers.

The following figures examine variation in the teacher evaluation model distribution across district contexts, including urbanicity, student poverty level, racial composition, and per-pupil expenditures. Results are presented for the 2024–25 school year, though the patterns in other years are very similar. Figure 1.3 highlights clear differences in model choice by urbanicity.[5] Between 55 percent and 65 percent of town or rural districts use NEE as their evaluation model, while only about 17 percent to 30 percent of city or suburban districts do so. Among town and rural districts that do not use NEE, most of them use either the MO model or

[5] In 2024-25, 9 percent of Missouri school districts were classified as urban, 8 percent as suburban, 12 percent as town, and 70 percent as rural. The distribution was similar across other years.

the MO T&L Standards model. City and suburban districts use a more diverse set of evaluation models.

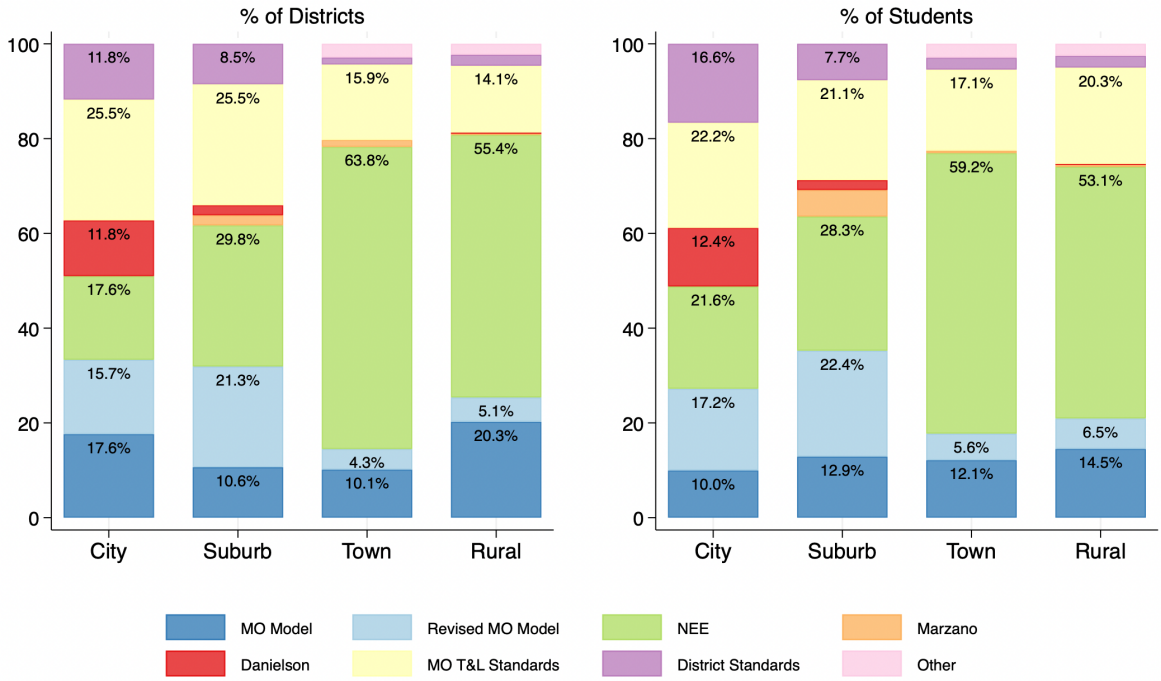

Figure 1.3. Teacher Evaluation Model Distribution by Urbanicity (2024-25)
Note. The left panel reports the percentage of districts that employ each teacher-evaluation model, whereas the right panel re-weights those percentages by district Pre-K–12 enrollment to show the share of students whose teachers are evaluated under each model.

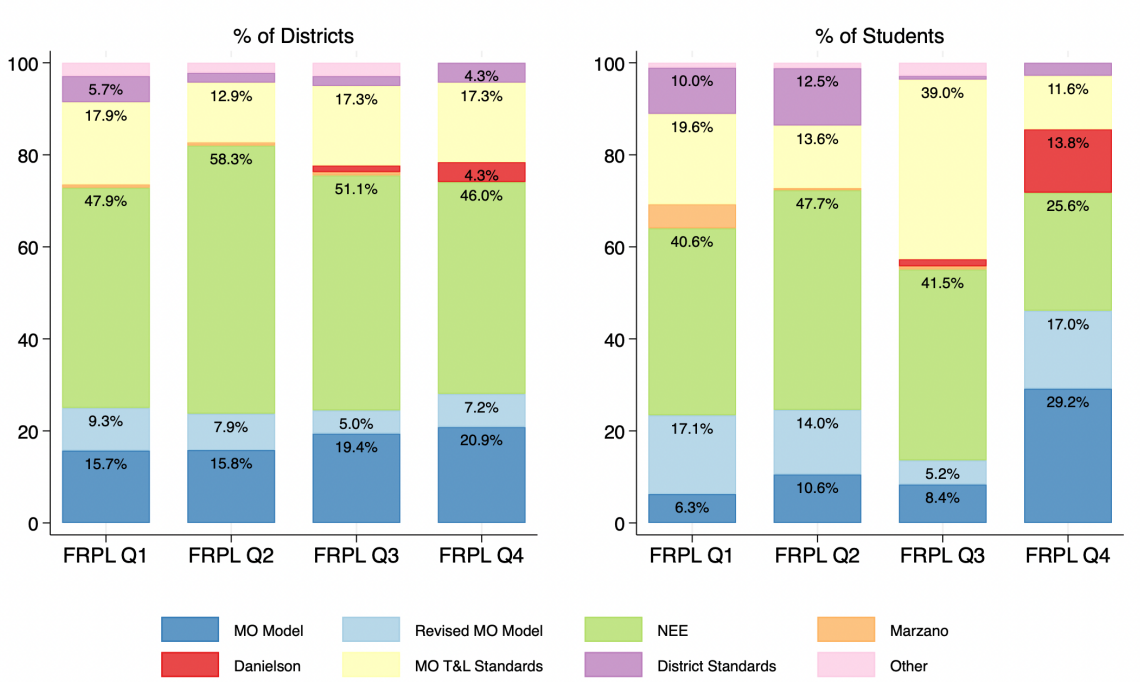

Figure 1.4. Teacher Evaluation Model Distribution by FRPL Quartiles (2024-25)

Note. The left panel reports the percentage of districts that employ each teacher-evaluation model, whereas the right panel re-weights those percentages by district Pre-K–12 enrollment to show the share of students whose teachers are evaluated under each model. Q1 indicates the lowest FRPL quartile and Q4 indicates the highest.

Figure 1.4 displays variation in teacher evaluation model distribution by student poverty level, measured as the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL). Districts are divided into quartiles based on their FRPL eligibility rates, with Q1 indicating the lowest FRPL rates and Q4 indicating the highest FRPL rates.[6] The NEE is the most commonly used model across all levels of district poverty. High poverty districts in Q4 are more likely to use Danielson model, compared to low poverty districts, driven predominantly by the adoption of the Danielson model among districts in the St. Louis area.

Figure 1.5 shows how the teacher evaluation model distribution varies by student racial composition, measured as the percentage of students of color (SOC), which in Missouri primarily includes Black students. Districts were grouped into quartiles based on SOC rates, with Q1 representing districts with the lowest share of SOCs and Q4 representing districts with the highest shares.[7] Because SOCs are predominantly concentrated in urban areas, these patterns closely mirror those observed by urbanicity. Districts in Q4 have lower NEE model use and higher use of alternative models, including the MO T&L Standards model, the Revised MO Model, and the District Standards model.

[6] In 2024–25, FRPL eligibility rates across districts ranged from 1.6 percent to 39.9 percent in Q1, 39.9 percent to 50.8 percent in Q2, 50.8 percent to 64.4 percent in Q3, and 64.4 percent to 100 percent in Q4.

[7] In 2024–25, SOC rates across districts ranged from 0 to 5.0 percent in Q1, 5.0 percent to 8.2 percent in Q2, 8.2 percent to 19.3 percent in Q3, and 19.3 percent to 99.6 percent in Q4.

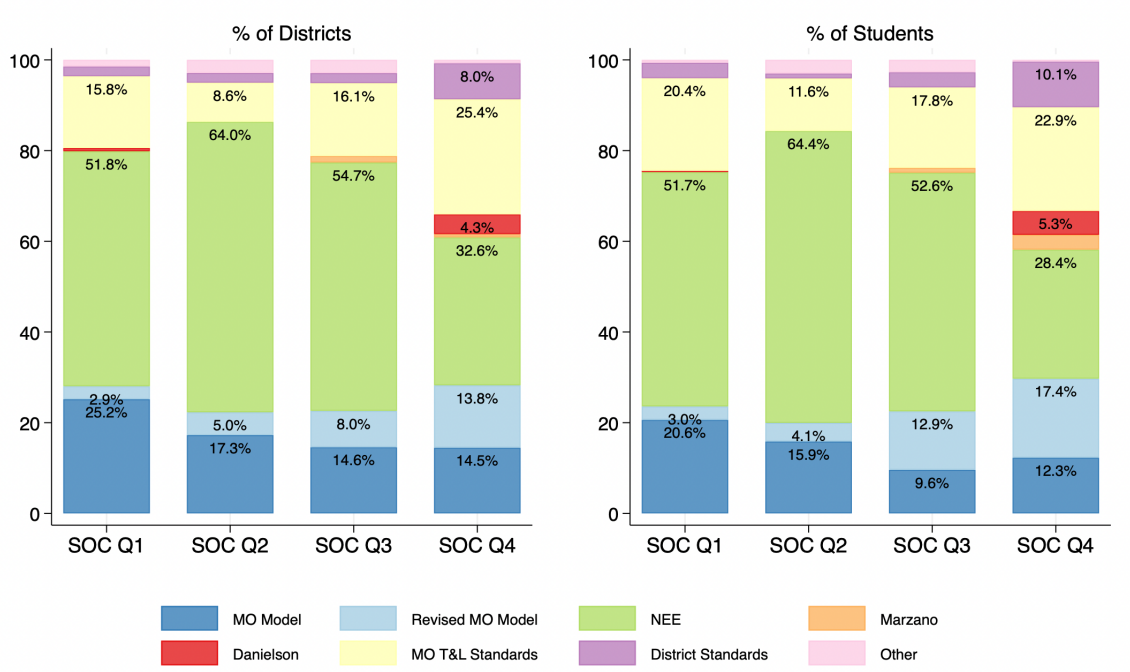

Figure 1.5. Teacher Evaluation Model Distribution by Students of Color Quartiles (2024-25)

Note. The left panel reports the percentage of districts that employ each teacher-evaluation model, whereas the right panel re-weights those percentages by district Pre-K–12 enrollment to show the share of students whose teachers are evaluated under each model.

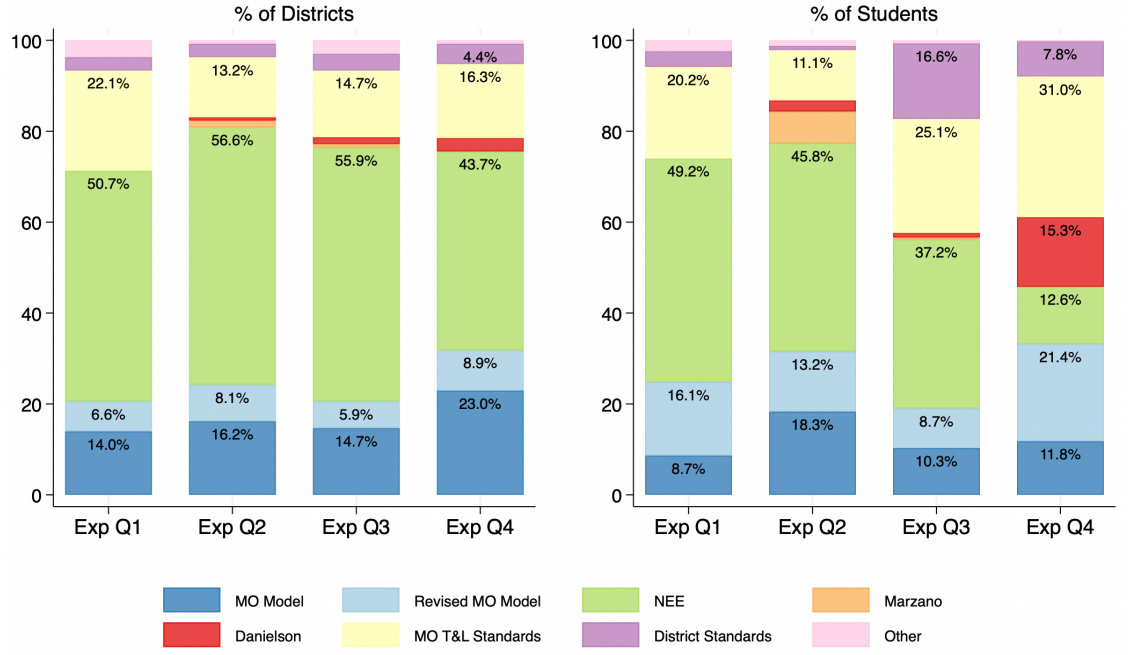

Figure 1.6. Teacher Evaluation Model Distribution by Expenditure Quartiles (2024-25)

Note. The left panel reports the percentage of districts that employ each teacher-evaluation model, whereas the right panel re-weights those percentages by district Pre-K–12 enrollment to show the share of students whose teachers are evaluated under each model.

Lastly, Figure 1.6 shows variation in the teacher evaluation model distribution by per-pupil expenditures. Districts are grouped into expenditure quartiles, with Q1 representing the lowest spending and Q4 the highest. [8] Districts in Q4 are less likely to use the NEE model, with about 40 percent adoption compared with 55 percent in Q1–Q3. This difference is considerably larger in weighted results that account for district enrollment.

2. Performance Rating Levels

Most evaluation models use either four or seven rating categories. Figure 2.1 shows how rating categories vary within and across models. The NEE model employs a scale with seven categories (about 96 percent). At the opposite extreme, the Danielson model uses a four-level scale across all adopting schools. The Marzano model, the Revised MO model, and district-developed standards also lean heavily toward four levels, with roughly two-thirds to four-fifths of their schools adopting that structure. The MO model and the MO T&L model split almost evenly between four and seven levels.

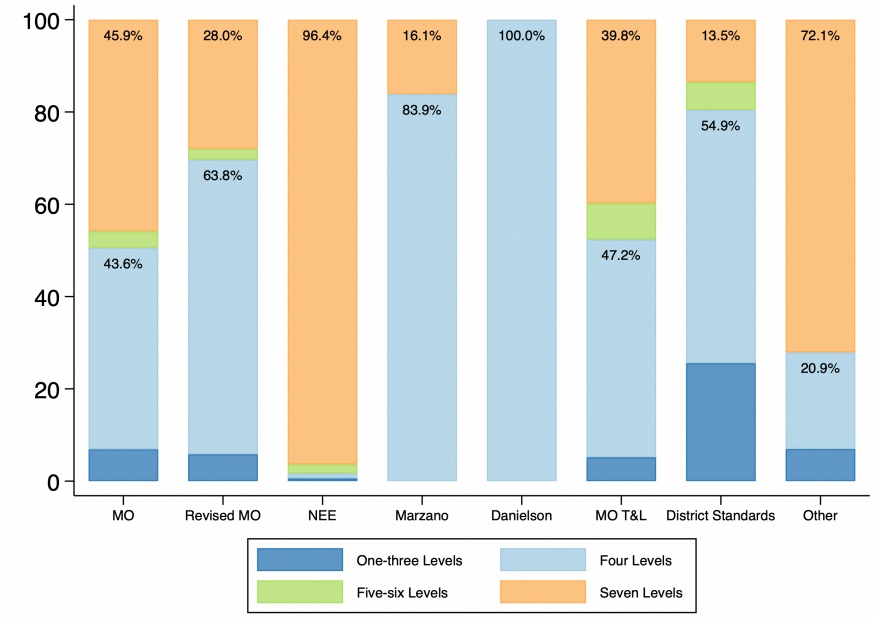

Figure 2.1. Distribution of Performance Rating Levels by Teacher Evaluation Model (2024–25)

Figure 2.2 aggregates over models to show the prevalence of rating scales across districts.[9]

The statewide pattern is highly concentrated. More than 65 percent of districts employ a seven-level rubric, covering over half of Missouri's public-school students. An additional 20

[8] Fiscal data from 2021–22 are used for all analyses covering 2022–23 through 2024–25, as they were the most recent expenditure data available at the time of analysis. Per-pupil expenditure was calculated as total district expenditure divided by total student enrollment. Across districts, per-pupil expenditure ranged from approximately $1,600 to $10,800 in Q1, $10,800 to $12,200 in Q2, $12,200 to $14,200 in Q3, and $14,200 to $27,500 in Q4.

[9] The number of performance rating levels for each district was assigned based on the modal number used across schools within the district. In the few cases where multiple modes existed, the maximum number of performance levels was selected.

percent rely on a four-level scale, accounting for roughly one-third of students. Only a small minority of districts use a different number of performance categories.

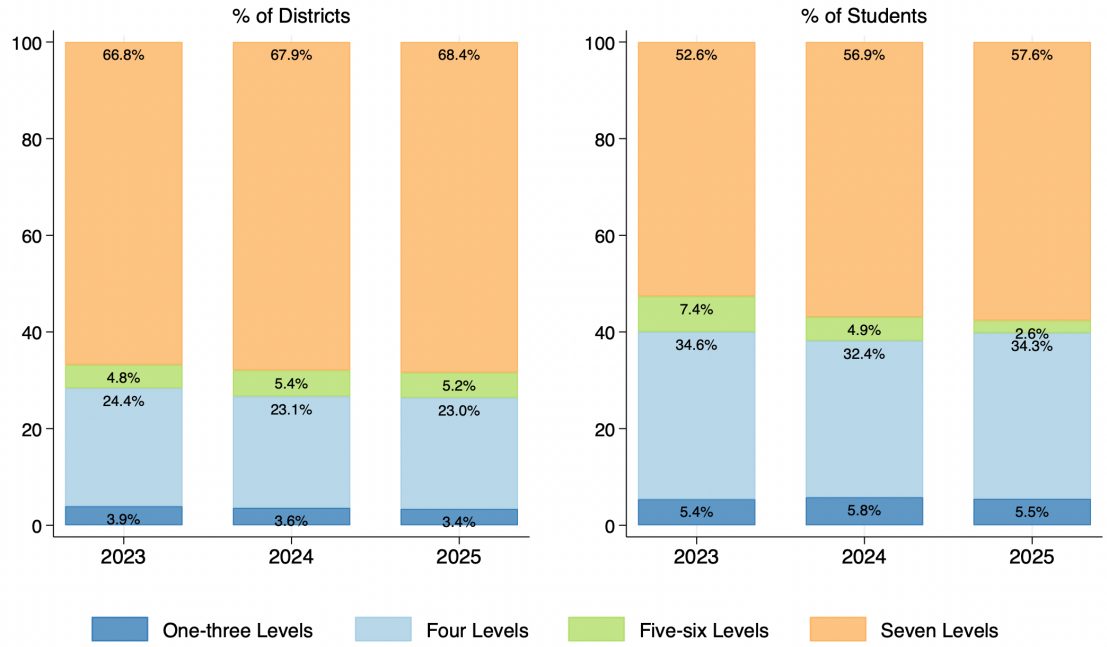

Figure 2.2. Distribution of the performance rating levels in Missouri Districts, 2022-23 – 2024-25
Note. The left panel displays the share of districts that apply each type of performance-rating scale, while the right panel weights those shares by district Pre-K–12 enrollment to highlight the proportion of students whose teachers are evaluated under each scale.

3. Percentage of Effective Teachers

Based on the performance rating level, we define "effective teachers" as those who received the following ratings: a rating of 2 in a 2-level system; 2–3 in a 3-level system; 3–4 in a 4-level system; 4–5 in a 5-level system; 4–6 in a 6-level system; and 5–7 in a 7-level system. The percentage of effective teachers in a school district is calculated as the number of effective teachers divided by the total number of teachers in each district.

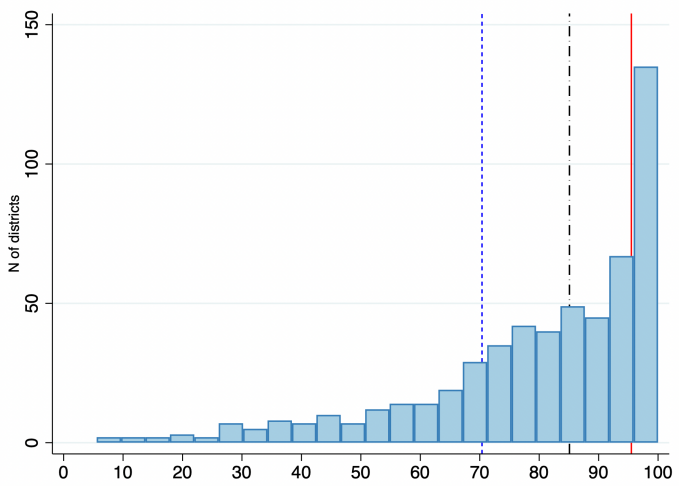

Figure 3.1. Distribution of District-Level Percentages of Teachers Rated "Effective" or Above (Histogram, 2024–25)

Note: The blue dashed line marks the 25th percentile, the black dash-dotted line marks the median (50th percentile), and the red solid line marks the 75th percentile.

Schools and districts tend to rate the overwhelming majority of teachers as effective and on average, about 80 percent of teachers are classified as effective.[10] As shown in Figure 3.1, the distribution of the percentage of effective teachers is extremely left skewed: three fourths of districts reported 70 percent or more of teachers as effective, half of districts reported 85 percent or more, and one fourth of districts reported 95 percent teachers as effective. We note the results are substantively similar if we use ratings of 5-6 as effective in a 6-level system and 6-7 in a 7-level system.

Figure 3.2 shows the geographic distribution of districts by the quartile of the percentage of effective teachers.

[10] The high concentration of "effective" ratings may be influenced by the survey guidance: "In compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Section 1111(g)(1)(B), low-income and minority students enrolled in this school cannot be taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers. Data submitted through this screen is used to complete the Ensuring Teacher Quality for All, Section 1112(b)(2), of the consolidated plan."

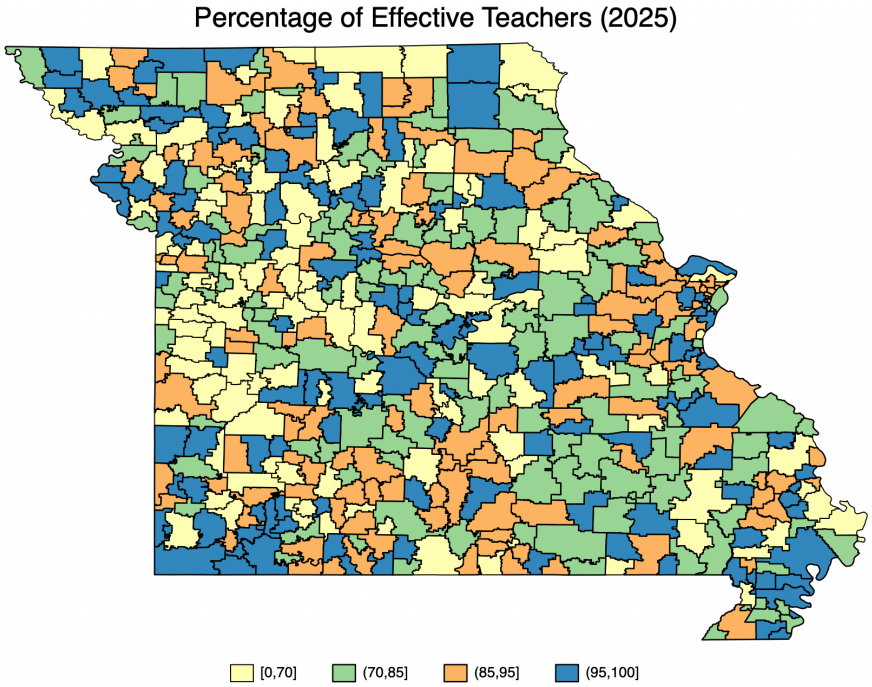

Figure 3.2. Geographic Distribution of Percentage of Effective Teachers by Quartile in Missouri School Districts (2024-25)

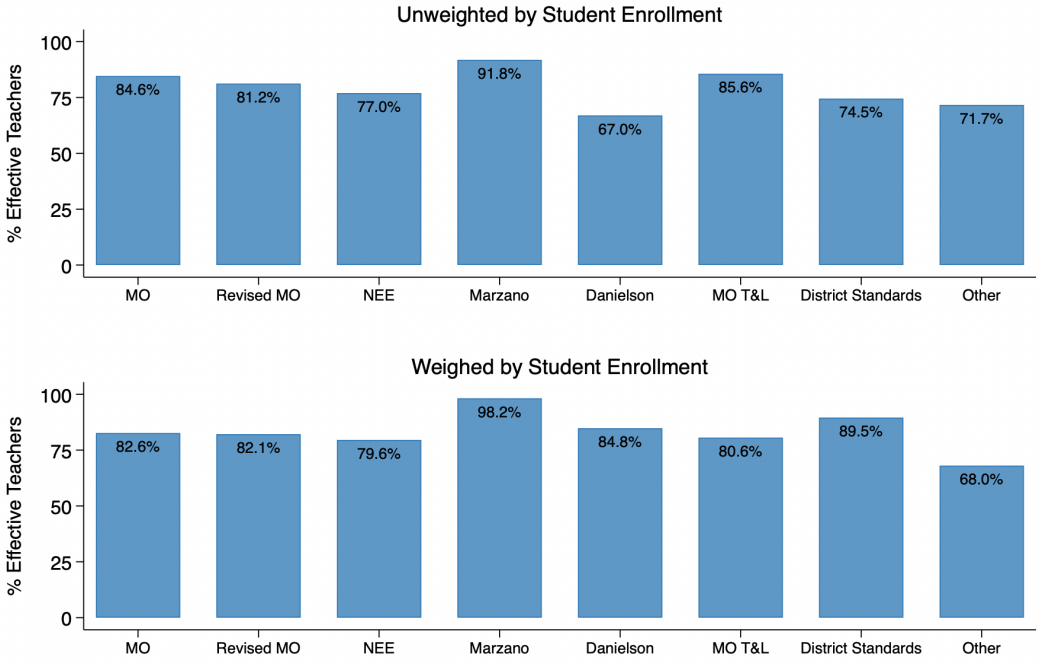

Figure 3.3. Percentage of Effective Teachers across the Evaluation Models (2024-25)
Note: Each bar shows the share of teachers rated effective under the indicated evaluation model. The upper panel weights districts equally and reports the simple average across districts. The lower panel weights districts by Pre-K–12 enrollment, reporting an enrollment-weighted average.

Teacher effectiveness scores are consistently high regardless of the framework in place. Figure 3.3 summarizes the average of teachers rated effective under each model. The upper panel presents an unweighted district average, treating every district equally. The lower panel applies the enrollment weights. Districts using the Marzano model report the highest ratings: on average, 92 percent of their teachers meet the "effective" standard, and that figure rises to 98 percent when weighted by enrollment.

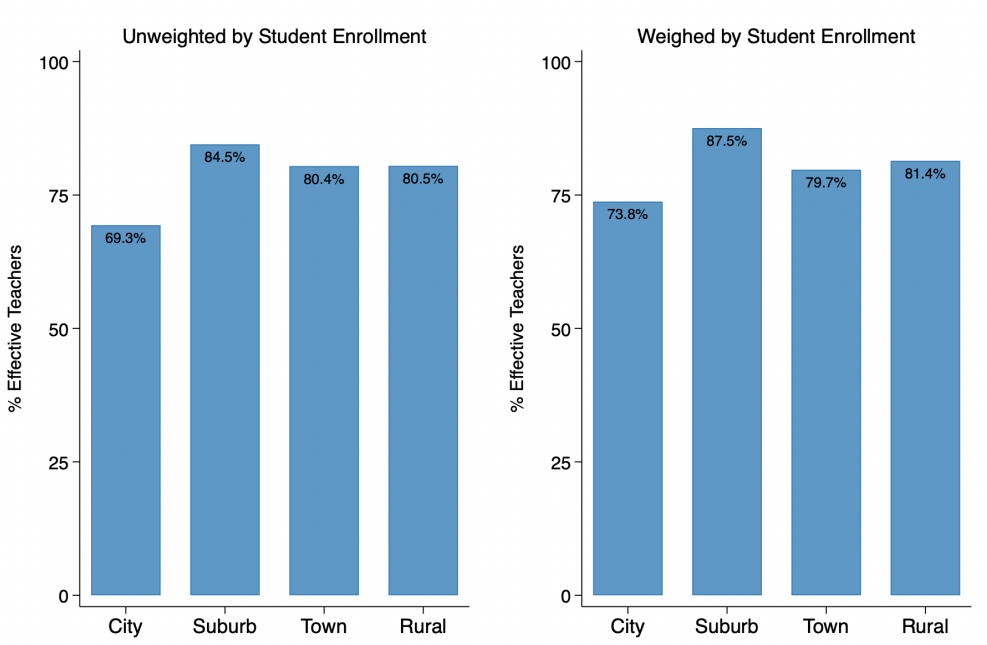

Figure 3.4. Percentage of Effective Teachers across Urbanicity (2024-25)

Note: Each bar shows the share of teachers rated effective under the indicated urbanicity category. The left panel weights districts equally and reports the simple average across districts. The right panel weights districts by Pre-K–12 enrollment, reporting an enrollment-weighted average.

Figure 3.4 shows variation in the percentage of teachers rated "effective" by urbanicity. Suburban districts have the highest ratings, city districts the lowest, and town and rural districts fall in between. Little variation is observed across other district context measures, including FRPL eligibility, student race/ethnicity, and per-pupil expenditures.

Summary

This landscape analysis documents how Missouri school districts evaluated teachers in the post-COVID period from 2022–23 through 2024–25. Although seven distinct models are in use, four account for nearly all districts: NEE, the MO Model, the MO T&L Standards model, and the Revised MO Model. NEE alone is used by roughly half of districts and reaches about 40 percent of students. Next, the model choice varies systematically by district context. NEE dominates in town and rural districts, while city and suburban districts draw on a more diverse mix that includes the Marzano, Danielson, and District Standards frameworks. Patterns by student demographics and per-pupil expenditures largely mirror these urbanicity differences. Most districts use a seven-level rating rubric (about 68 percent), with another 23 percent using a four-level rubric. Regardless of which model districts use, the overwhelming majority of teachers are rated "effective" by our consideration. On average, roughly 80 percent of teachers meet the effective threshold, and one in four districts rate at least 95 percent of their teachers as effective.

These findings raise questions for state and district policy. The high and consistent share of teachers rated effective, observed across every model and most district contexts, suggests that current evaluation systems may not be differentiating performance in ways that support the goals of professional growth, recognition, and accountability that motivate evaluation in the first place. When nearly all teachers receive top ratings, it becomes difficult to identify educators who would benefit from targeted support or to highlight exemplary practice for broader learning. At the same time, the geographic and contextual sorting of models, with rural districts converging on NEE and urban districts using a wider mix, suggests that local capacity, cost, and fit shape model adoption as much as design features do. Any state-level effort to strengthen evaluation should therefore account for the practical constraints smaller districts face in implementing more resource-intensive frameworks.