

## **AFT Disappointed in Release of Los Angeles Teachers' Data**

The AFT is extremely disappointed that the Los Angeles Times has chosen to ignore experts from across the country who have pointed out both the limitations and dangers of using, in isolation, the value-added method to rate a teacher's performance. On Aug. 29, the Times released teachers' valued-added model results, which opens the way for teachers to be "unfairly judged by incomplete data masked as comprehensive evaluations," AFT president Randi Weingarten says.

"Leading researchers, including the Educational Testing Service, RAND Corp., the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education and the Economic Policy Institute, have concluded that value-added models, which deal with predictions and assumptions, are inherently undependable and imprecise," Weingarten says. "All have concluded that value-added models should never be used in isolation—without other relevant factors—to judge a teacher's performance. All have found value-added models to be inappropriate for high-stakes decisions about individual teachers, students and schools. Even one of the pioneers of value-added research, William Sanders, considers the publication of these value-added scores, by themselves, to be wrong.

"The Los Angeles Times ignores the growing number of districts around the country that are building comprehensive development and evaluation systems that inform teaching and learning. We must use good and meaningful data—but the real value of data is to inform instruction. Ironically, most of the teachers cited in the article were surprised to learn of their ranking and couldn't explain why their particular method of teaching works. That is why we should follow the experts' recommendation that this data should not be published. "The leaders of the Los Angeles Unified School District and the local union representing the district's teachers are now working to create a teacher development and evaluation system that will use data as it should be used—to help teachers and students succeed. Indeed, at the same time that they agreed to accept furlough days to prevent further disruption in their schools, the local union agreed to add two professional days to review data connected to student learning. That process has already begun, a fact the Times omitted." [AFT press release] August 29, 2010