

## Teachers union, New York State agree to link test scores to teacher firings

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The teachers unions and the state have made a deal to link student test scores to decisions about whether teachers can be fired, a compromise the union has long opposed.

The deal comes just weeks before the deadline to reapply for \$700 million in federal money, known as Race to the Top. States get more points if they have systems in place to link student performance to teacher evaluations.

Instead of rating teachers satisfactory or unsatisfactory, the teachers will be dubbed highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective.

Teachers rated ineffective two years in a row could be put through an expedited

firing process, limited to 60 days instead of the months, and sometimes years, it currently takes.

For the first two years, 20% of the rating would come from students' scores on the state's standardized tests, 20% from tests developed by districts and the rest from teacher and principal observations. After that, 25% would be from state tests and 15% from local ones.

Some subjects and grades are not tested through state exams, so many teachers would not be evaluated using state test results.

In 2008, the state legislature passed a law that barred the use of student test score results in teacher evaluations, which expires June 1.

The bill, backed by the teachers unions, has been bitterly attacked by city officials.

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