



Principals' Use of Teacher Effectiveness Data for Talent Management Decisions

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Timothy A. Drake
Mollie Rubin
Christine M. Neumerski
Ellen B. Goldring
Marisa A. Cannata
Jason A. Grissom
Patrick Schuermann

Timelines of Talent Management Decisions and Teacher Effectiveness Data Availability

There is growing recognition that schools need to be more strategic in how they manage their primary resource, teachers. Investment in measuring effective teaching—including value-added estimates, teacher observations, and student surveys¹—has increased the availability of data to make teacher talent management decisions.^{2,3} The availability of these data could be particularly important in establishing effective hiring practices that create an information-rich hiring process aligned with a comprehensive talent management system.⁴

Findings from this brief emerged from a larger study, *Supporting Principals to Use Teacher Effectiveness Data for Talent Management Decisions* (see principaldatause.org). Here, we share insights on the relationship between talent management decision making and the availability of teacher effectiveness data. Our research in eight school systems sheds light upon:

- The *timing* of various talent management decisions and the availability of teacher effectiveness data
- General *recommendations* for how central offices can begin to be more strategic in supporting principals' use of teacher effectiveness measures for talent management decision making.

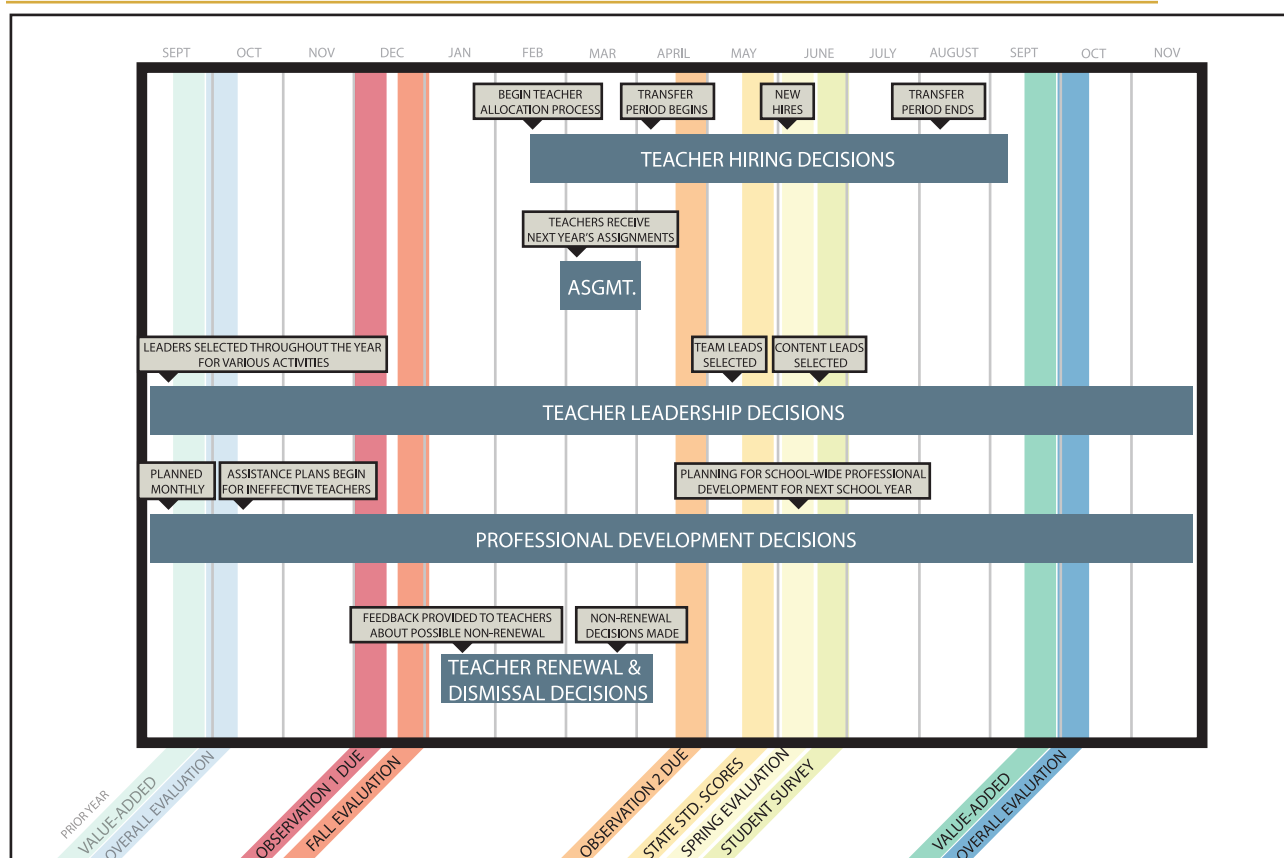
What We Learned

The late timing with which teacher effectiveness data are made available is problematic.

Principals frequently cite timing as a strong or moderate barrier in using teacher effectiveness data for talent management decisions. Specifically, principals often express frustration at not having state student achievement test scores, teacher value-added estimates, and overall teacher evaluation composite scores in time to make decisions about hiring, teacher assignment, and dismissal.

The lateness of data has the biggest impact on decisions about teacher assignment and renewal or dismissal. Spring observation scores, state standardized test scores, student survey results, teacher value-added estimates, and overall evaluation scores are often released after assignment and renewal decisions are made. In addition, the transfer period often closes before principals have teacher value-added estimates and overall teacher evaluation composite scores.

Figure 1: Timeline of talent management decision areas and teacher effectiveness data availability



Methodology

As part of a larger study on principals' use of teacher effectiveness data for talent management decisions, we conducted research in six urban school districts and two charter management organizations (CMOs) during the 2012–13 school year. The sites have been or currently are engaged in developing new and varied measures of teacher effectiveness (e.g., teacher observations/appraisals, value-added or growth measures, and

student surveys). We conducted more than 100 semi-structured interviews with central/home office personnel at the sites. Next, within each system, we selected a sample of schools that represented different age groups (i.e., elementary, middle, and high) and achievement levels (i.e., low and high) and conducted 76 semi-structured interviews with principals from these schools.

These timelines were created from interviews with system leaders and principals.

As [Figure 1](#) suggests, key talent decisions, such as renewal and dismissal decisions, depend on overall teacher evaluation scores, which cannot be finalized until value-added scores are returned to the district by the state into the start of the next school year.

Other findings from key talent management decisions include:

Teacher Hiring. With respect to hiring processes for transferring teachers, principals could have access to prior observation data, though many systems do not have a way of systematically providing this information to them. None of the systems collected teacher effectiveness measures for teachers coming from outside the system.

Teacher Assignment. Formative assessment and teacher observation scores figure predominately in assignment decisions. Most of these decisions have to be formalized before state test scores, value-added, and overall evaluation scores become available.

Teacher Leadership. Although teacher leadership decisions could draw upon teacher effectiveness measures that come out during the summer, few principals reported using these measures in making these decisions. One system did report using past evaluation scores to create a “pool” of eligible candidates for school- and system-level leadership assignments.

Teacher Professional Development. While school improvement plans and other professional development decisions are made during the summer when student achievement and value-added information becomes available, principals seem to rely heavily on teacher observation scores to inform individual, grade and subject, and school-wide professional development decisions. Principals also report using observation scores throughout the school year to make adjustment to professional development content areas and foci.

Teacher Retention and Dismissal. Teacher retention and dismissal decisions often need to be made before principals have access to student achievement scores, teacher value-added measures, stakeholder feedback surveys, and overall evaluation composite scores.

“The standardized testing data is a moot point because by the time we get it back it's the summer, and we've already completed our budgets, we've already completed our hiring, we've already written our school performance plan, so it's kind of a moot point by the time we get it back”

- Principal

Other *general findings* regarding teacher effectiveness data availability and talent management decision making include:

- ■ Teacher observation data were available more often than other kinds data and were therefore used more frequently by school leaders throughout the school year for various human capital decisions, including teacher assignment, professional development, and renewal/dismissal.
- ■ State standardized test scores, teacher value-added or student growth, and overall teacher evaluation composite scores were generally not available in time for use within an academic school year.
- ■ In most systems, school leaders only had access to teacher observation and evaluation composite scores within their building; thus, when considering intra-district hires, school leaders often had to contact other leaders directly or petition the Central Office information on transferring teachers observation and evaluation scores.
- ■ Stakeholder feedback surveys, including those from students, parents, and teacher-peers were often not available in time for use within an academic school year.
- ■ School leaders rarely considered multiple years of data, but rather viewed data and decision making within a single academic year.

Although these findings are specific to the these eight study sites, we believe that they highlight the need for systems to think about when talent management decisions need to be made and whether any such decisions or data collection can be adjusted to have data and decisions be more aligned. Accordingly, we propose the following set of recommendations for all school systems engaged in this work:

Recommendations

- ■ **Design data systems to support the use of multiple years of teacher effectiveness data.**
- ■ **Train principals to use teacher effectiveness data longitudinally and holistically.**
- ■ **Make teacher effectiveness data available to principals during the transfer hiring process.**
- ■ **Clearly specify which data elements should be used for each talent management decision, and ensure that this expectation is clearly communicated to school leaders, site-level staff, and system supervisors.**

For more information and additional reports from this study, please see www.principaldatause.org or contact tim.drake@vanderbilt.edu.

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Endnotes

- 1 See Measures of Effective Teaching Project (2010). *Learning about Teaching: Initial Findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project*. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- 2 On the importance of strategic human resource management in schools, see Curtis, R. (2010). Weaving the Pieces Together: A Framework for Managing Human Capital in Schools. In Curtis, R., & Wurtzel, J. (Eds.), *Teaching Talent: A Visionary Framework for Human Capital in Education*, pp. 171–195. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. See also Odden, A. (2011). *Strategic Management of Human Capital in Education*. New York: Routledge Press.
- 3 Talent management decisions include decisions about teacher recruitment, hiring, induction, assignment to classrooms and subjects, evaluation, feedback and support, professional development, leadership responsibilities, and retention.
- 4 For a description of how the traditional hiring process is an information-poor process, see Liu, E., & Johnson, S. M. (2006). New teachers' experiences of hiring: Late, rushed, and information-poor. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, 324–360.
- 5 See www.principaldatause.org for a full description of this study.
- 6 Additional details on the larger study can be found in Goldring, E. B., Neumerski, C. M., Cannata, M., Drake, T. A., Grissom, J. A., Rubin, M., & Schuermann, P. (2014). *Principals' Use of Teacher Effectiveness Data for Talent Management Decisions*. Available at www.principaldatause.org

Appendix

Specific information from each of the eight study sites are found below. Please note that we have removed any identifying information.

Additional reports and information can be found at www.principaldatause.org.

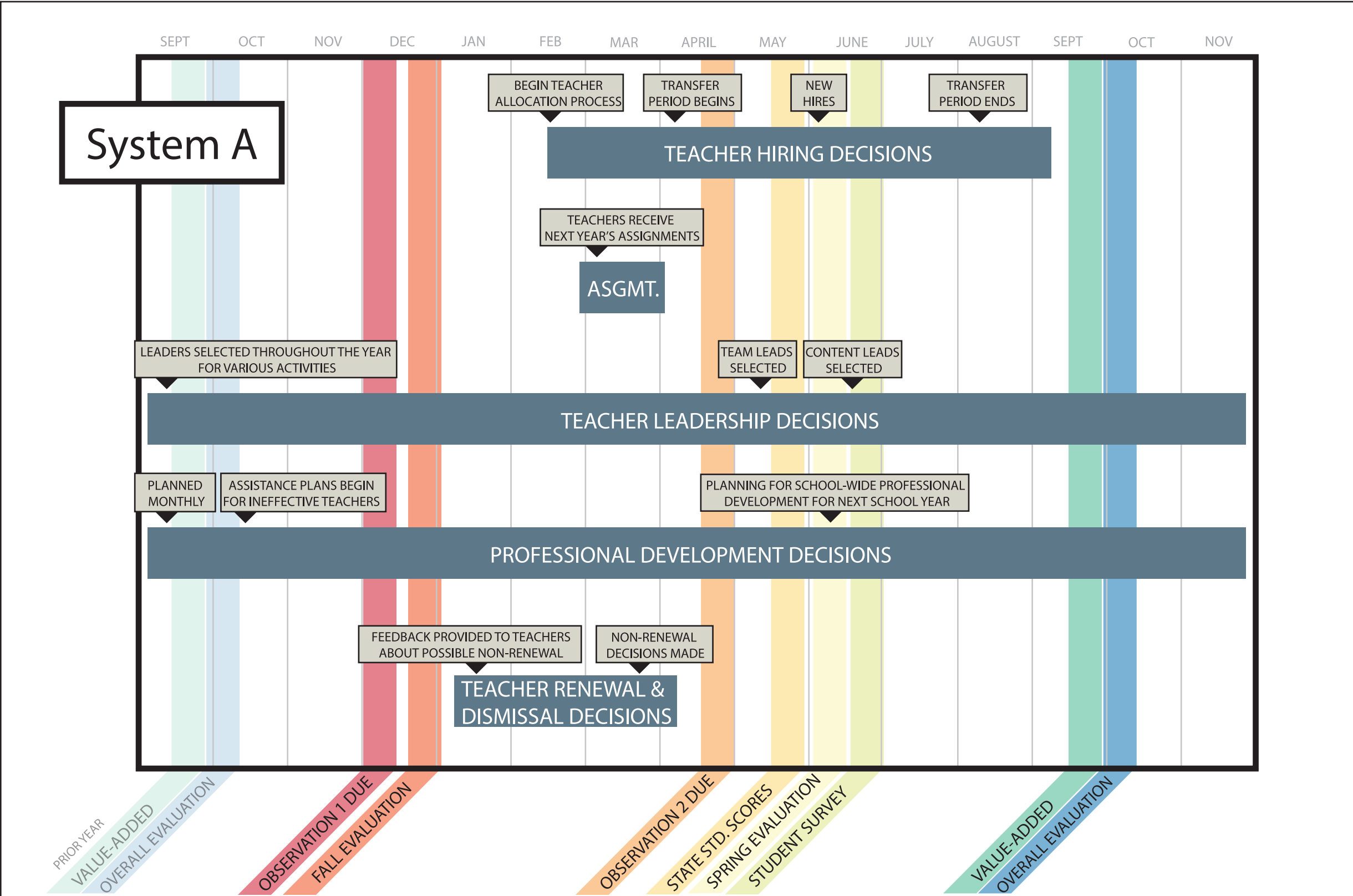
System A

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Fall & Spring Summative Principal Evaluations of Teachers
- Student Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- Key talent decisions, such as renewal/dismissal and some compensation decisions, depend on overall evaluation scores, which cannot be finalized until value-added scores are returned to the district by the state into the start of the next school year.
- With respect to **hiring processes for transferring teachers**, principals could have access to prior evaluation information. Many principals reported not knowing that they had this access, however, some requested it from interviewing teachers. It appears that more up-to-date data, such as fall observation information, could be made available to principals prior to transfer decisions as well.
- **Assignment decisions** for the next year are made before final evaluation data are available and even before many spring observations are complete. We did, however, learn that many principals were using earlier formative testing or observation data to inform assignment decisions.
- Although principals largely do not report using teacher effectiveness data for **teacher leadership decisions**, observation and preliminary evaluation data could be used over the summer to make leadership decisions before the start of the new school year.
- Individual **professional development** decisions are made throughout the year and are largely based on teacher needs identified during observations from the observation rubric. School-wide professional development planning takes place in the summer and for many principals is guided by needs identified in the prior year's observations.
- Some **teacher contract nonrenewal** decisions are held into the fall of the subsequent year because they depend on final evaluation data. Renewal decisions for probationary teachers are made in March before all evaluation data are available.



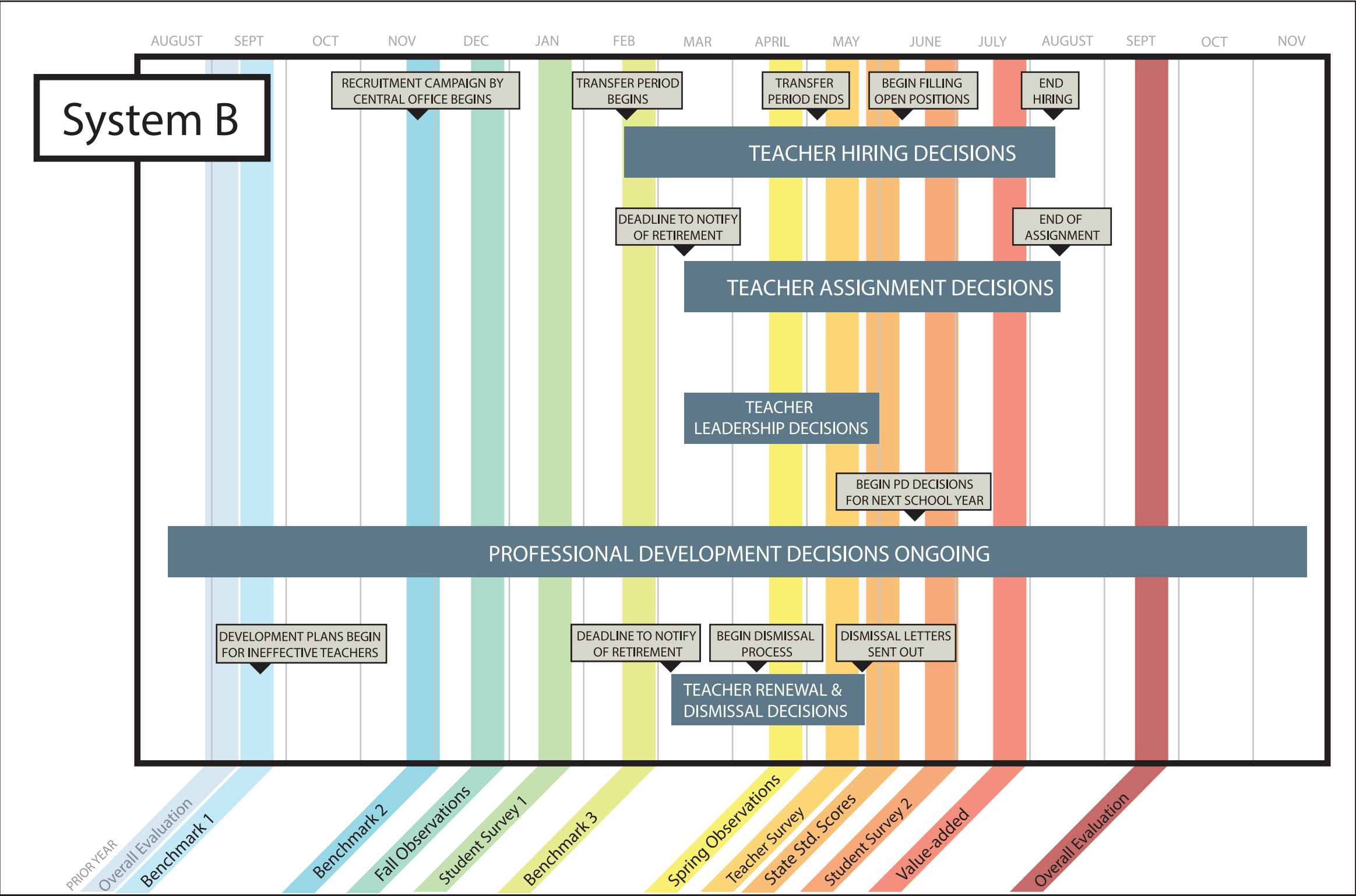
System B

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Benchmark Exams
- Student Surveys
- Teacher Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- Principals noted they received teacher value-added data in August “at the earliest,” and complete standardized test scores in January. They believed they needed this information **much earlier** in order to use it for decision-making.
- With respect to **hiring processes**, many principals reported that they would like to use value-added data, but perceived these scores as too “old” to be useable.
- Principals rarely viewed multiple measures of teacher effectiveness over multiple years, instead relying on a single point in time when using data for talent management decision-making.
- Key talent decisions, such as renewal/dismissal decisions, depend on overall teacher evaluation scores, which cannot be finalized until value-added scores are returned to the district by the state into the start of the next school year.



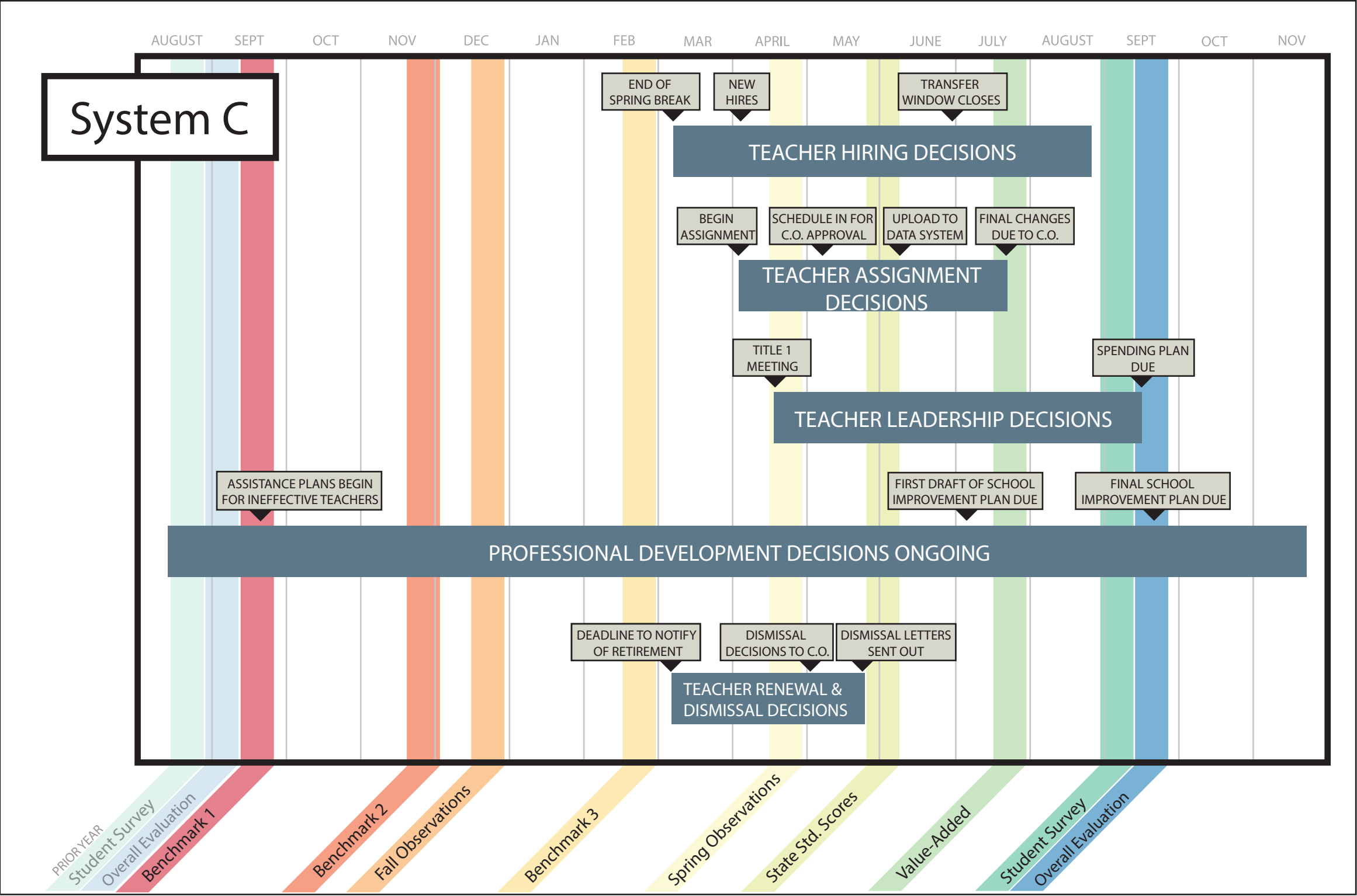
System C

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Benchmark Exams
- Student Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- First semester teacher observation scores and student benchmark exams are available before the start of all of the talent management decision cycles. The student survey and overall evaluation scores are not available in time for use.
- With respect to **teacher hiring**, principals could have access to transferring teachers' observation and state standardized scores, though not their value-added scores. In this system, principals did not have access to these data for transferring teachers unless they requested it from the teachers.
- **Assignment decisions** needed to be submitted to the Central Office for approval before state standardized test scores, teacher value-added scores, student surveys results, and the overall evaluation composite scores were made available.
- Though principals in this system did not report using teacher effectiveness data for **teacher leadership decisions**, teacher observation, state standardized achievement scores, and value-added data could be used over the summer to inform leadership decisions before the start of the new school year.
- With regards to **professional development**, a draft of the school improvement plan is required before principals had value-added, student survey, and overall evaluation information. Accordingly, principals often reported relying solely on teacher observation data to make these decisions.
- **Teacher dismissal decisions** needed to be submitted to the Central Office before state standardized test scores, teacher value-added scores, student surveys, and the overall evaluation composite data were made available for use.



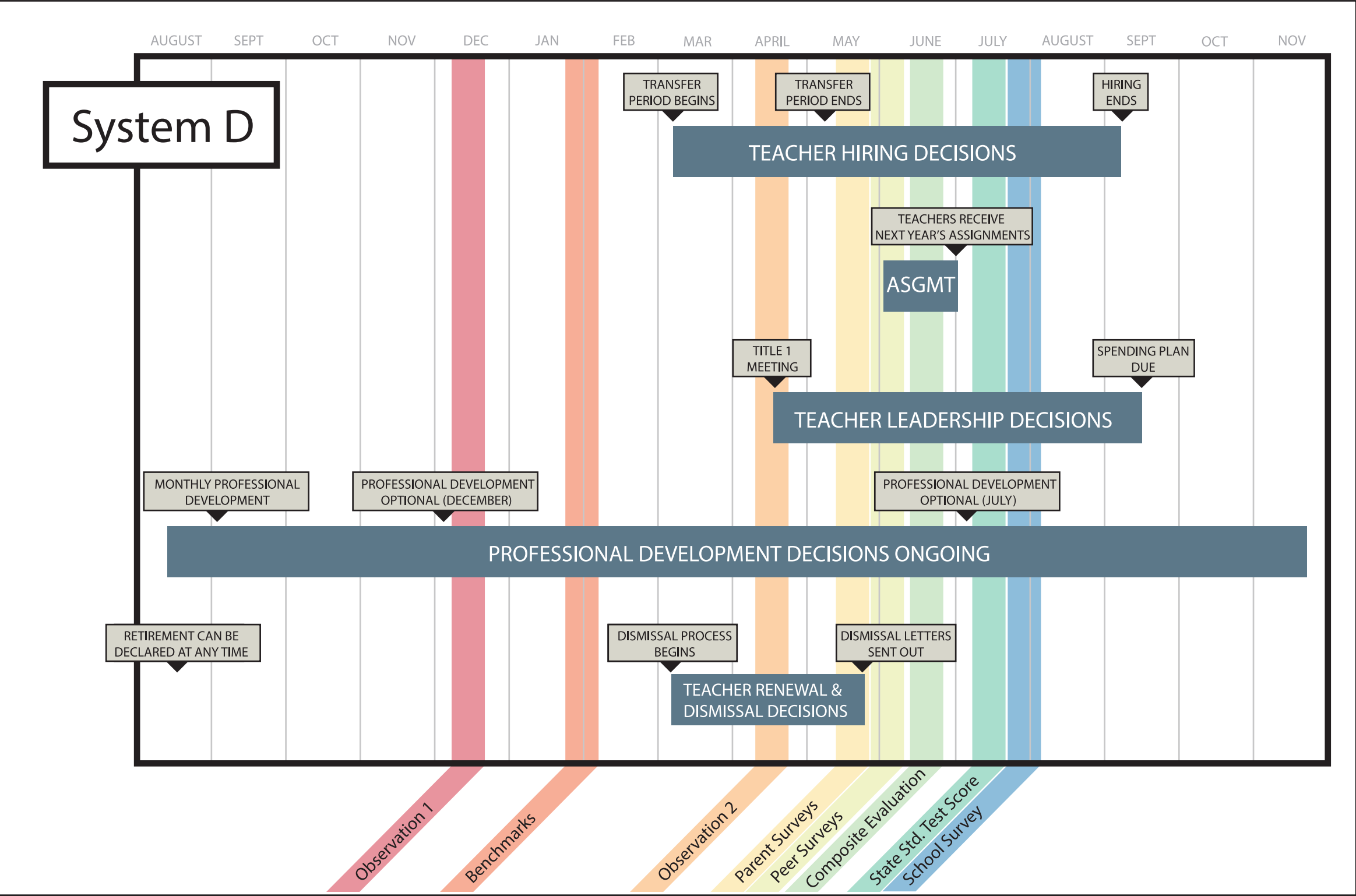
System D

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Benchmark Exams
- Parent, Peer, and School Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- Key talent decisions, such as renewal/dismissal and some compensation decisions, depend on overall evaluation scores. This will become problematic once value-added scores are entered into the equation because they are not returned to the district by the state in time.
- With respect to **hiring processes for transferring teachers**, principals could have access to prior evaluation information. Many principals reported not knowing that they had this access, though some requested it from interviewing teachers. It appears that more up-to-date data, such as information from first semester teacher observations, could be made available to principals prior to transfer decisions as well.
- **Assignment decisions** for the next year were made before state standardized achievement data were made available. Data from benchmark exams and both observations were available at this point, however. Information from state achievement results from previous years could be consulted as well.
- Although principals largely did not report using teacher effectiveness data for **teacher leadership decisions**, observation and preliminary evaluation data could be used to make leadership decisions. Currently, these positions are largely influenced by budget-related considerations.
- Individual **professional development** decisions were made throughout the year and were made largely on the basis of teacher needs identified during observations based on the observation rubric. The majority of school-wide professional development planning was carried out centrally, but some principals offered additional professional development at faculty meetings. Topics of focus were usually decided upon throughout the year. Need was most often identified from walk-throughs, observations, and benchmark test results.
- Teachers were notified of **contract nonrenewal** in end of May, prior to the end of the school year. Many principals found this to be problematic because those teachers remained in their positions until the end of the school year.



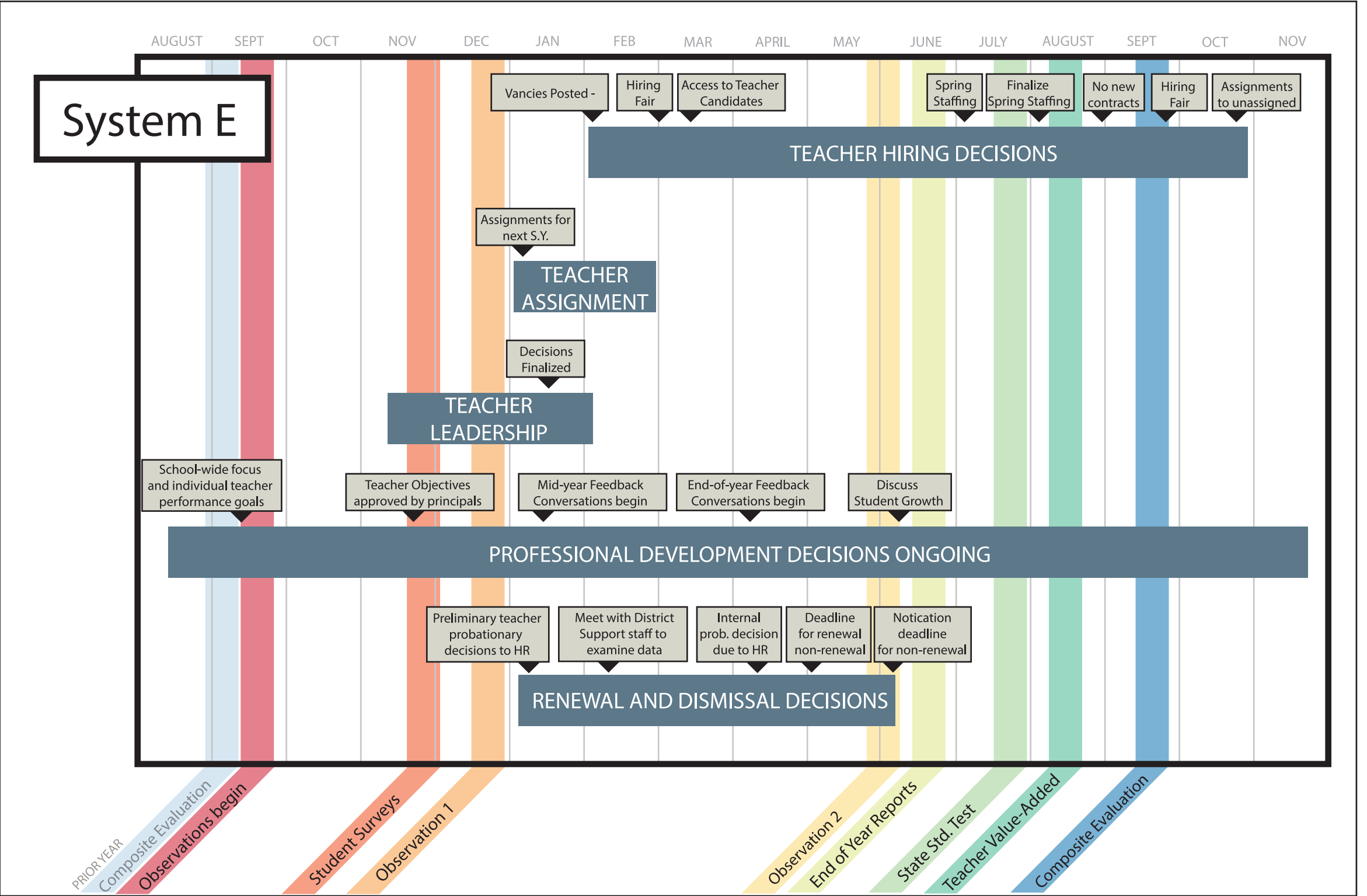
System E

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Surveys
- End-of-year Reports
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- Principals wanted to consider state standardized test scores in making **nonrenewal decisions**, but they receive those results in July, and nonrenewal decisions must be made by May 1st.
- Principals did not rely on Professional Growth Plan (PGP) results in making **nonrenewal decisions**, as those were determined in conversation with teachers in June, while nonrenewal decisions were made in May.
- In terms of **teacher hiring**, principals desired access to both state standardized test scores and observation data, but did not believe they could access these in time for hiring decisions, although these data are available in time for late Summer and Fall hiring decisions.
- Principals **rarely viewed multiple measures of teacher effectiveness over multiple years**, instead relying on a single point in time when using data for talent management decision-making.



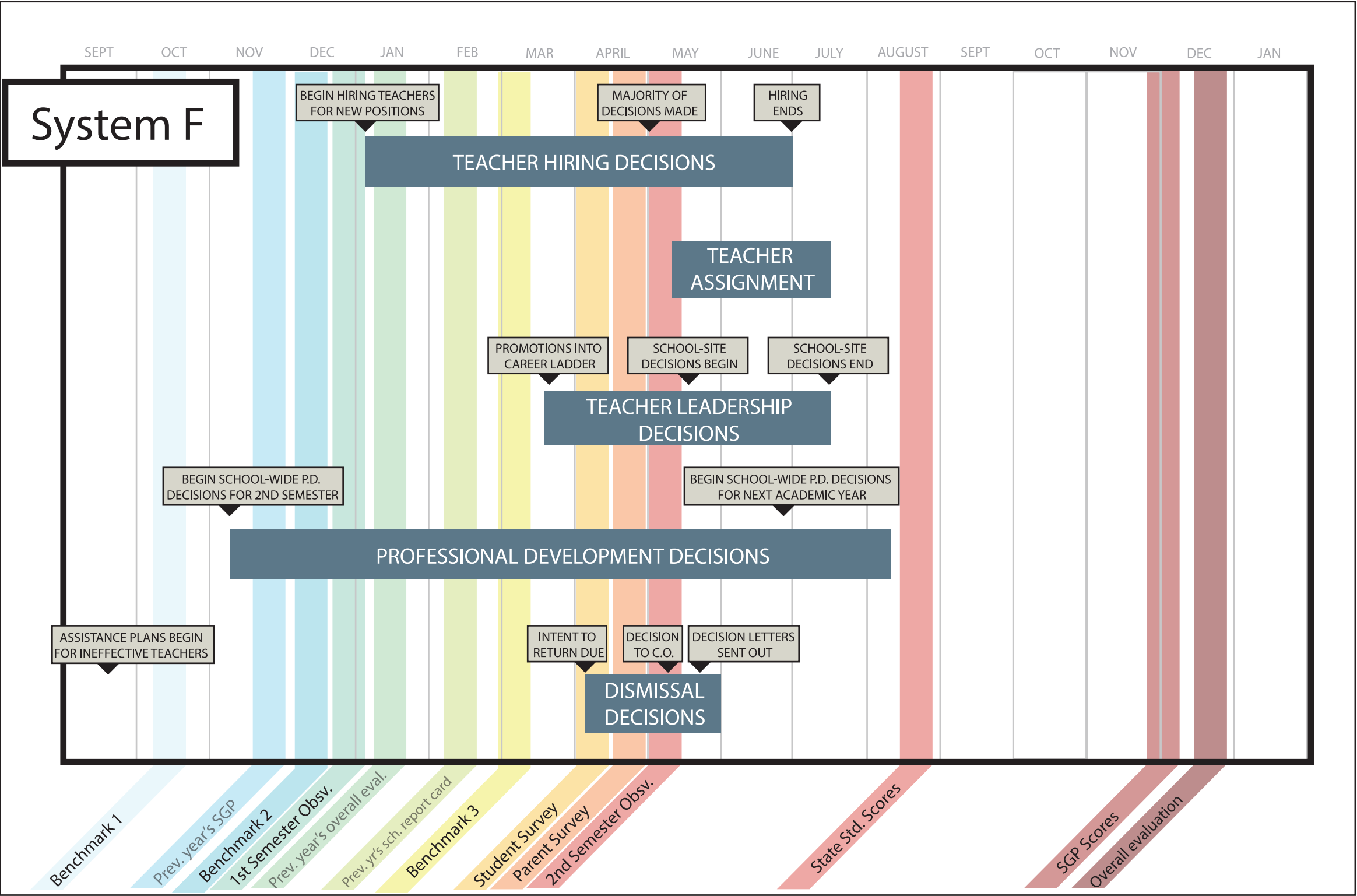
System F

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Benchmark Exams
- Student Surveys
- Parent Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- First semester teacher observation scores and student benchmark exam results are available before the start of many of the talent management decision cycles. State standardized exam scores, SGP, and overall evaluation composite are not available in time for use within an academic year.
- With respect to **hiring processes**, principals did not systematically request or use past teacher effectiveness data. It appears that more up-to-date data, such as fall observation information and student benchmark scores, could be made available to principals for teachers transferring from within the system.
- **Assignment decisions** had to be made before principals had access to state student achievement results, teacher value-added or student growth, or overall teacher evaluation composites scores.
- Student benchmark results, teacher observations, and stakeholder feedback surveys were available to principals for **teacher leadership decisions**, though principals and system leaders reported issues of data quality regarding these measures. As such, principals tended to rely on their own professional judgment in making these decisions.
- Individual **professional development** decisions were made throughout the year and were made largely on the basis of teacher needs identified during observations based on the system's observation rubric.
- **Nonrenewal decisions** were primarily driven by teacher observation data because state standardized test scores, student growth scores, and overall evaluation scores were only available after decisions were made in May.



System G

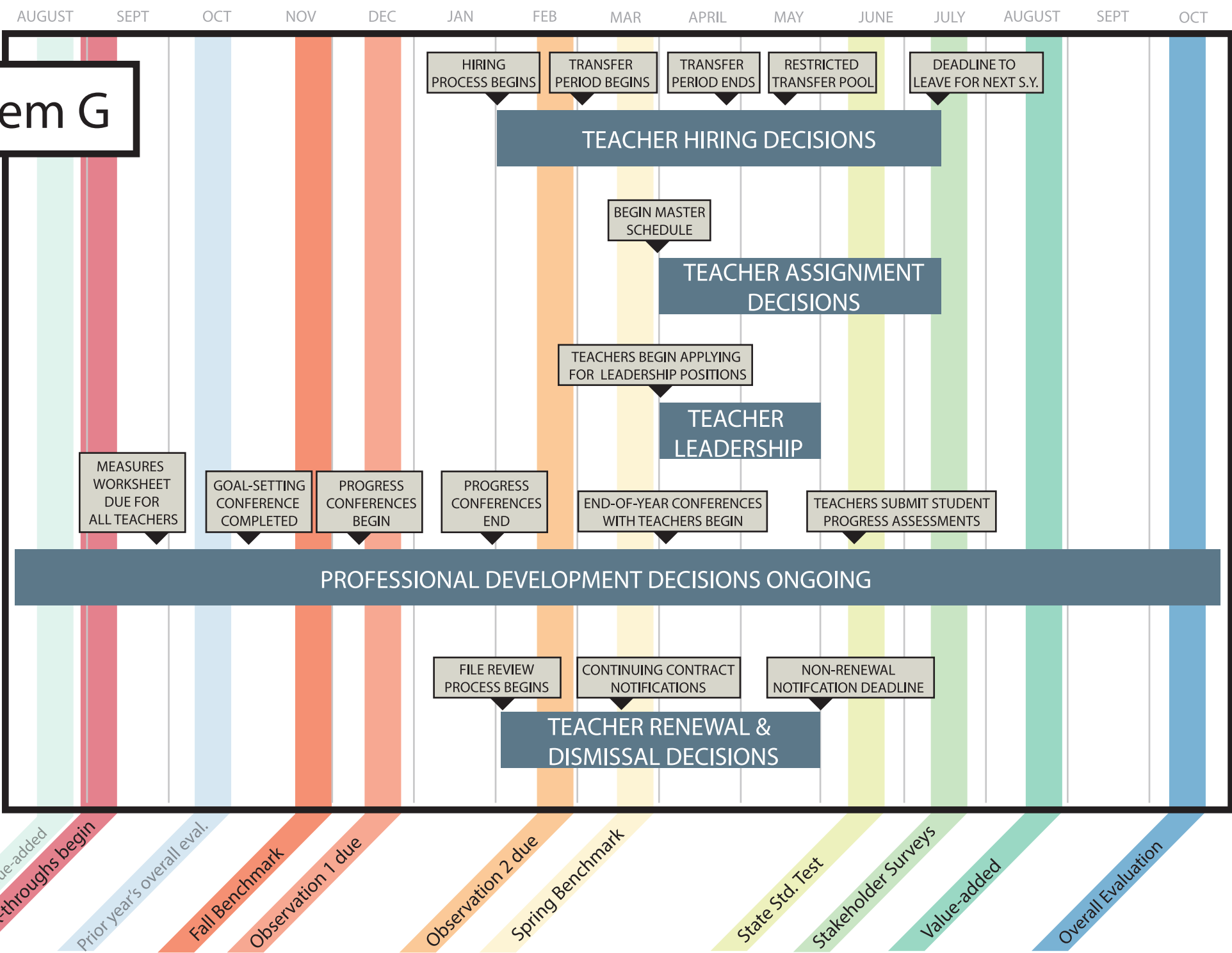
Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Benchmark Exams
- Stakeholder Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- Key talent decisions, such as renewal/dismissal and some compensation decisions, depend on overall evaluation scores, which cannot be finalized until value-added scores are returned to the district into the start of the next school year.
- With respect to **hiring processes for transferring teachers**, principals could have access to prior evaluation information. Many principals reported not knowing that they had this access, however, though some requested it from their contacts in the Central Office or asked the teachers they interviewed to provide it. It appears that more up-to-date data, such as fall (and possibly even spring) observation information, could be made available to principals prior to when transfer decisions are made.
- **Assignment decisions** for the next year were made before final evaluation data were available. We did however learn that many principals were using earlier formative testing or observation data to inform assignment decisions.
- Although principals largely did not report using teacher effectiveness data for **teacher leadership decisions**, observation and preliminary evaluation data are available to make leadership decisions before the start of the new school year.
- Individual **professional development** decisions were made throughout the year and were made largely on the basis of teacher needs identified during observations based on the observation rubric. School-wide professional development planning took place in the summer and for many principals is guided by needs identified in the prior year's observations.
- **Teacher contract nonrenewal** decisions began in the winter at meetings between school and Central Office leaders. At that point, data were available from the fall formative assessment and observation.

System G



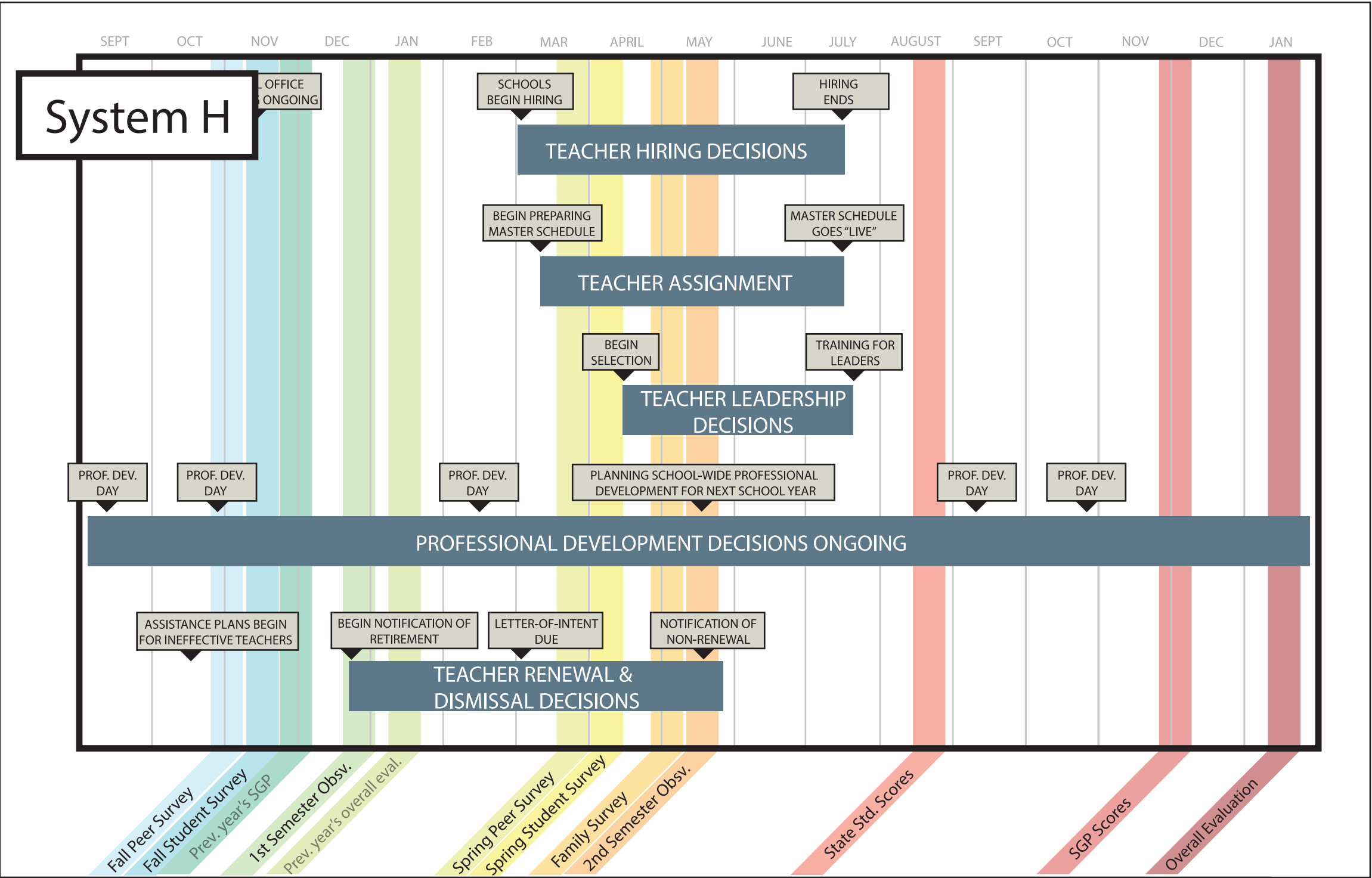
System H

Teacher Effectiveness Data

- Teacher Observations
- Student Surveys
- Peer Surveys
- Family Surveys
- State Standardized Test Scores
- Teacher Value-added or Student Growth Scores
- Overall Teacher Evaluation Composite Scores

Findings

- First semester teacher observation scores and student and peer fall survey results are available before the start of many of the talent management decision cycles. State standardized exam scores, SGP, and overall evaluation composite are not available in time for use within an academic year, though principals report using prior year's information to inform current year's decision making.
- With respect to **teacher hiring**, principals could have access to transferring teachers' survey results and teacher observation scores. These data were made available to principals. In addition, principals reported using the teacher observation rubric to evaluate teacher demonstration lessons.
- **Assignment decisions** go "live" in the middle of July, before principals have access to state standardized test scores, SGP scores, and overall evaluation composite scores for teachers; nonetheless, principals reported using past years' observation scores and SGP to inform teacher assignment.
- **Teacher leadership** selection begins before many of the teacher effectiveness measures were available. For some leadership positions, however, the system required candidates to meet a specified threshold on the prior year's overall evaluation composite to be considered.
- With regards to **professional development**, the system had dedicated professional development days throughout the year, where principals could use teacher observation data to inform the choice of content. Principals also reported developing weekly or biweekly professional development using the teacher observation scores.
- **Teacher dismissal decisions** needed to be submitted to the Central Office before state standardized test scores, SGP, and the overall evaluation composite scores were available for use.





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