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# Preface

This book presents the first unified, national discussion of how to plan, conduct, use, and judge classroom-based student evaluations. It provides the foundation for more ethical, useful, feasible, and sound evaluation principles, policies, and practices. Publication of *The Student Evaluation Standards* makes several important goals easier. For example,

1. Staff of preservice and in-service programs to teach the best evaluation practices can take advantage of this book and other Joint Committee materials.
2. Teachers and administrators can read this book to develop, strengthen, and reflect on their own expertise.
3. School leaders can use this book as a foundation upon which to develop written policies and guidelines.
4. Students can gain an understanding of their important roles in evaluations and learn how to use evaluations more effectively.
5. Parents can learn how to effectively engage in the evaluation process to assist their children in learning.

*The Student Evaluation Standards* focuses primarily on student evaluations in classrooms. Some may ask why these standards do not speak directly and extensively to large-scale, high-stakes testing. The Joint Committee chose to direct its efforts to the improvement of the evaluation practices used to guide the learning and progress of students. We believe that improving

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The information contained in this Preface is not part of this American National Standard (ANS) and has not been processed in accordance with ANSI's requirements for an ANS. As such, this Preface may contain material that has not been subjected to public review or a consensus process. In addition, it does not contain requirements necessary for conformance to the standard.

student evaluation practices will substantially serve the goals and objectives that high-stakes tests attempt to measure. Readers interested in standards addressing large-scale, high-stakes testing should consult the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education [AERA, APA, NCME], 1999).

Many reviewers and field-trial participants have heralded *The Student Evaluation Standards* as a comprehensive and important guide for teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Some reviewers have suggested that we consider shortening the book. They argued that teachers do not have the time for more than a few standards accompanied by brief explanations that are presented on a few pages. The Joint Committee believes that the issues addressed in student evaluations are complex, and that it is not appropriate to make the *Standards* inaccurately simplistic. We have tried to ensure readability for both teachers and lay audiences. Sections such as the Functional Table of Contents are intended to enhance access to the *Standards*, and it is the intention of the Committee to encourage development of further support materials. We trust that those who use this book will find the material to be useful and worthwhile.

Member volunteers from the Joint Committee's 16 sponsoring organizations and more than 100 other individuals contributed thousands of hours to produce and test *The Student Evaluation Standards*. Their unselfish contributions attest to the importance we all attach to the central role that sound evaluation plays in student learning.

Taken together, the 28 standards provide a working philosophy for student evaluations. They define the Joint Committee's conception of the principles that should guide and govern student evaluations, and they offer practical suggestions for observing these principles.

Created in 1975, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation is a nonprofit organization incorporated exclusively for developing evaluation standards and promoting their use. Since 1989, the Joint Committee has been a member organization of the American National Standards Institute and follows ANSI procedures in developing, revising, and approving standards. It is the only educational organization developing ANSI-approved evaluation standards. The Committee performs its work on behalf of its constituents, namely, the people and groups involved in conducting educational evaluations and using the results of educational evaluations. *The Student Evaluation Standards* is the third set of standards developed by the Joint Committee. The previous two sets are *The Personnel Evaluation Standards*, published in 1988, and *The Program Evaluation Standards*, published in 1994. The rich history of the Joint Committee is recounted briefly in the Preface to *The Program Evaluation Standards*.

Perhaps the feature that most distinguishes this set of standards from the Joint Committee's standards for program and personnel evaluations is that these standards are meant to serve persons who do not have substantial training in evaluation. In spite of differences in the audiences for the three books, the ties among them are many and strong. Indeed, all three books of standards have the improvement of education as their goal. Their commonality is evident in the following paragraph, which was adapted from *The Program Evaluation Standards* (1994):

The *Standards* is an effort to provide guidance to effective evaluation. The *Standards* alone cannot guarantee or ensure the quality of any evaluation. Sound evaluation will require the exercise of professional judgment in order to adequately apply the *Standards* to a particular setting. The *Standards* is intended to reflect best practice at the time it was written. The Joint Committee recognizes that, as professional practice changes and the professional knowledge base concerning evaluation develops over time, the *Standards* itself will need to be revised to address those new developments. However, the Joint Committee is confident that the *Standards* will continue to lead to useful, feasible, ethical, and sound student evaluations, and that these evaluations will, in turn, contribute significantly to the betterment of education in diverse classroom settings.

## Reference

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education. (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.