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**New System to Help Ensure Consistent Teacher Evaluation  
Launches in Nearly 500 School Districts**

***'Observation Engine' Highlights Evidence-Based Approach to Boosting Teacher Effectiveness***

TULSA, Okla.—Leaders from Tulsa Public Schools, the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration, and Empirical Education Inc. today announced the launch of a powerful new tool for K-12 administrators. Observation Engine—a data-driven online tool that helps school officials maintain and verify consistency in classroom observation—can improve quality and build trust in teacher evaluations.

Tulsa Public Schools is making Observation Engine an essential tool in implementing its Tulsa Model for Observation and Evaluation, a framework for ensuring high teacher performance and best practices in creating a successful learning environment. Nearly 95 percent of the school districts in Oklahoma are piloting the Tulsa Model evaluation system this year.

The Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration is providing statewide training on the model, including the calibration training developed by Tulsa Public Schools. Led by the council's Executive Director, Steven Crawford, over 2,000 administrators throughout the state are on track to get tested, and certified on the model in just two weeks.

"We are pleased to be supporting the statewide implementation of this highly regarded and evidence-based observational framework born out of Tulsa Public Schools," Crawford said. "The use of Empirical Education's services has made it possible for us to conduct the initial certification at a state-wide scale."

The Observation Engine was developed as part of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching project, in which Empirical Education has participated as a research partner, conducting R&D on the validity and reliability of observational measures. The tool uses an extensive library of classroom videos and generates automatic data reports to help standardize ratings by principals, instructional coaches, and other classroom observers.

"Teachers desire accurate assessments of their work and meaningful feedback. Principals become far superior instructional leaders, 'coaches,' and more reliable and consistent raters through calibration training," said Dr. Keith Ballard, Tulsa Public Schools' superintendent. Ballard expressed pride in the

work of district staff in developing the Tulsa Model for Observation and Evaluation, which he called “an excellent framework for measuring best practices in classroom instruction.”

Jana Burk, the Executive Director of Tulsa Public Schools’ Office of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, and a former teacher and school law attorney, echoed Superintendent Ballard’s assessment, calling the Observation Engine-powered training and observer certification “critical.” The tool integrates both the certification and calibration functions necessary for measuring the reliability of administrators assigned to conduct classroom observations.

“With Observation Engine, we have the means to collect and analyze calibration data to enhance the training principals receive,” she said.

“We are excited to be working with educators in Tulsa as they take their observational protocol statewide,” said Denis Newman, CEO of Empirical Education. “Observation Engine has helped them efficiently move their innovative approach from a district experiment to a large-scale implementation.”

### **About Tulsa Public Schools**

Serving over 41,000 students, Tulsa Public Schools is the largest school system in Northeast Oklahoma. Historically a model school district in the state of Oklahoma, Tulsa Public Schools has been a proponent of creating and supporting effective teachers and leaders in every school. The Tulsa Model for teacher evaluation is unique, in that it was created hand-in-hand with teachers. Tulsa’s work has been supported by the generous contributions of Tulsa civic donors as well as a \$1.5 million “accelerator” grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. [www.tulsaschools.org](http://www.tulsaschools.org)

### **About the Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration**

CCOSA is a statewide organization providing technical assistance, professional development, legal assistance, and advocacy for superintendents, principals, and other administrators in public and private schools throughout Oklahoma. With nearly 3,000 practicing and retired administrators, CCOSA is the umbrella organization for several Oklahoma-based education associations. [www.ccosa.org](http://www.ccosa.org)

### **About Empirical Education**

Empirical Education Inc. is a Palo Alto, Calif.-based research company that provides rigorous and independent evidence to inform school system decisions. The company partners with education leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of school policies, programs, and technologies. The company brings its expertise in research, data analysis, engineering, and project management to customers that include the U.S. Department of Education, educational publishers, foundations, leading research organizations, and state and local education agencies. Learn more at [www.empiricaleducation.com](http://www.empiricaleducation.com).