

Teaching Matters: Strengthening Teacher Evaluation in Massachusetts

A POSITION PAPER by
MASSPARTNERS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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A Collaborative Venture of the

Massachusetts Association of School Committees



Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents



Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association



Massachusetts Federation of Teachers



Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association



Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association



Massachusetts Teachers Association



MASSPARTNERS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In an unprecedented collaboration, the members of MassPartners reviewed traditional teacher evaluation systems, debated new approaches, and reached agreement about how to strengthen teacher evaluation procedures in Massachusetts' schools.

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Foreword

TEACHING MATTERS IS A MILESTONE for the people who affect the lives and academic achievement of children in public schools across the Commonwealth. Teacher evaluation holds promise for improving teaching – and thereby, student achievement. In recognition of the tremendous potential for improvement that effective teacher evaluations can offer, the organizations that make up MassPartners agreed to develop suggested evaluation procedures that respect the roles and values of the teachers and administrators of this state. *Teaching Matters* is the fruit of that commitment.

The members of MassPartners are a diverse group with often opposing viewpoints. It is no small matter that the leaders of these organizations pledged to find common ground on issues that significantly affect everyday life in schools. I applaud the executives and the Boards of Directors of each state association and thank them on behalf of all children for seeking and finding new ways to work together. MassPartners was founded on the premise that problems are best solved, opportunities realized, and successes celebrated when key stakeholders collaborate. *Teaching Matters* proves the legitimacy of that premise.

Schools are dynamic places to work. Some students come with advantages, an eagerness to learn, and supportive home environments; others do not. What matters most is what we as parents, educators, and policy makers do to take students from where they start and provide them with experiences that will advance their knowledge and abilities. To meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of our student population, operating systems and practices that are in place in schools and governed by state and local policies require continuous review and improvement.

Teaching Matters is a conceptual framework designed to promote reflection and spark discussion about how best to evaluate teacher performance. It offers ideas and suggestions intended to elevate traditional teacher evaluation so that it becomes a meaningful part of instructional improvement strategies – one that is rich in data and valued by teachers and administrators alike. Many of the concepts in *Teaching Matters* require the kind of leadership, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student achievement that is evident in schools throughout Massachusetts. Working and talking together – school committees, superintendents, principals, teacher organizations, and parents might choose to use aspects of the document that match their own culture and interests.

It was a unique collaborative process that resulted in the production of *Teaching Matters*. Continuing dialogue about its contents is critical. The MassPartners Board of Directors invites you to join in supporting its ideals and to participate in forums that will further define the policy implications, procedures, and professional development necessary to convert its fundamental features into practice. The members of MassPartners and I look forward to your feedback on *Teaching Matters*.

Patricia A. Sweitzer, Administrator
MassPartners for Public Schools

**TEACHING MATTERS:
Strengthening Teacher Evaluation in Massachusetts**

A MASSPARTNERS POSITION PAPER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The most important thing is to have a generation of well-educated educators. To have people in the schools and in the administrative offices and in state capitals and in Washington and in the districts who care deeply about children getting an excellent education (Ravitch, 2000).

TEACHERS and the quality of teaching are the critical link to improving schools and student achievement. Numerous strategic components exist in schools, in institutions of higher education, and in local and state policies to ensure teacher quality. These include teacher preparation, licensing, re-certification, professional development, and teacher evaluation. They all operate simultaneously and influence one another.

Research conducted for this paper revealed that successfully increasing student achievement requires creating and sustaining organizational structures in schools that focus on assessing and improving teaching and learning. Teacher evaluation is one of those structures, yet often remains a task that teachers endure, a task conducted by already overly extended school administrators.

In this paper, MassPartners for Public Schools proposes a new system for evaluating teachers. We reached agreement on its design by consulting with lead practitioners in the field of performance evaluation, reviewing published research, surveying teachers and administrators to learn about the obstacles to effective evaluation and how to overcome them, and engaging in collegial dialogue among MassPartners members.

Career Differentiated Evaluation System

IF the purpose of evaluating teachers is to improve teaching and learning, and we believe it is, then

schools are not getting the dividends in teacher professional growth for the amount of time now spent on evaluation. We found that limited resources and competing priorities are impetus enough for rethinking teacher evaluation procedures. When coupled with contemporary research about supervision and evaluation, it became evident that having teachers work with each other, and in partnership with supervisors is more effective than traditional evaluation procedures for improving classroom practice.

If the purpose of evaluating teachers is to improve teaching and learning, and we believe it is, then schools are not getting the dividends in teacher professional growth for the amount of time now spent on evaluation.

This paper promotes a career differentiated evaluation system in which the type of evaluation a teacher receives depends upon experience, skill, and longevity. While there are several configurations possible, we suggest organizing four paths: Beginning Teacher, Teacher New to the District, Experienced Teacher, and Teacher in Need of Improvement. Within this paper, MassPartners outlines the evaluation procedures that would apply to teachers as they progress through their careers.

More than one-half of teachers and one-third of principals surveyed believe that evaluators do not spend adequate time in classrooms.

Beginning Teachers receive frequent and practical assistance from peers and supervisors and annual formal evaluations. Teachers in Need of Improvement enter an alternative system, and Experienced Teachers work in teams using data and information to analyze the impact of teaching strategies on student mastery of curriculum standards and lesson objectives. Traditional observation-based evaluations¹ for experienced teachers are infrequent.

In some schools, teacher evaluation informally resembles this idea. By formalizing an evaluation system that acknowledges career differences, educators become responsible for advancing their classroom and organizational goals. Simultaneously, they are empowered to do so.

Research Summary

MASSPARTNERS for Public Schools conducted research during the summer of 2000 to answer two questions:

- 1) Is teacher evaluation being carried out in a way that substantially supports the improvement of teaching and learning? and,
- 2) If teacher evaluation is not supporting the improvement of teaching and learning, what factors prevent it from doing so?

¹ Observation-based evaluation is used throughout this paper to describe the traditional evaluation process, commonly known as summative evaluation, including the pre-observation conference, observation, documentation, and post-observation conference.

A literature search was followed by focus group meetings and a written survey conducted in three Massachusetts school districts, including a large urban district, a wealthy suburban district, and a moderate-sized rural school district. While this is a small sample, the opinions are considered credible because of the socio-economic diversity of communities surveyed and the consistency of responses among stakeholders, regardless of the type of district. Some of the key findings include:

■ **The lack of time available to supervisors prohibits traditional teacher evaluation from being an effective school improvement strategy.**

More than one-half of teachers and one-third of principals surveyed believe that evaluators do not spend adequate time in classrooms. We estimate that one observation-based evaluation can take up to four hours and that time accounts for only one classroom observation, not nearly enough for truly assessing performance.

In a differentiated evaluation system, supervisors are free to provide extra help to teachers in need while skilled teachers can chart their own professional growth and become resources for the whole school community. In effect, it aligns teacher evaluation with other school improvement initiatives.

■ **Redesigning the role of principal, who is the primary supervisor and evaluator in most schools, is paramount to the success of a contemporary teacher evaluation system.** A primary function of the principal is to create, support, and participate in structures in which teachers work collegially to evaluate and improve their practice. Principals lead professional communities, share instructional leadership with skilled teachers, and are held accountable in their own evaluations for doing so.

This requires professional development for principals and teachers. By overwhelming majorities in our survey, principals (96%) and teachers (80%) agreed that if evaluation is to improve teaching and

learning, ongoing professional development is required.

■ **There is a lack of agreement between supervisors and teachers about how professional standards for teachers are manifested in classroom practice.** Regardless of the type of teacher evaluation system used in a district, teachers and supervisors need a common language and understanding for talking about teaching practice if they are to communicate meaningfully about what is going on in classrooms.

This is especially important since professional standards are the foundation against which a teacher's performance is measured. Broad professional standards should be described with examples from real classroom practice so that educators know what they mean.

■ **Using multiple sources of data and information for evaluation attests to the commitment by educators to analyze and improve practice for the benefit of students.** While classroom observations and conferences are valuable sources of information, institutional cultures that expect excellence think highly of assessing and reflecting upon all aspects of a teacher's professional life as defined by professional standards for teachers. For example, teachers and supervisors seek out and analyze evidence about teacher planning, teacher assessment of student performance and modification of instructional methods, and working relationships with colleagues and parents.

Expanding the types of data about student performance that inform practice is also required. Assessments that measure progress against state and local curriculum standards, and in-class assessments that measure incremental improvement for a given group of students should be regularly reviewed and analyzed by teachers and supervisors.

■ **The shift to Standards-based Education requires that supervisors and teachers engage in**

conferences, conversation, and coaching that are focused on improving student achievement by improving instruction. By large majorities, principals (100%) and teachers (90%) believe that conferences are an important part of evaluation, yet they are an infrequent formality in traditional evaluation procedures. In addition, 65% of principals, but less than half of teachers (42%) believe that conferences are done well.

Standards-based education requires rethinking traditional approaches to the work of teaching and the strength of a professional community, the heart of which is ongoing and data-based conversations about classroom practice.

■ **Principals perceive that collective bargaining agreements prohibit the dismissal of underperforming teachers, yet neither teachers nor administrators wish to maintain underperforming teachers in classrooms.** Reasonable and fair policies and procedures must be in place, universally understood and practiced by teachers and administrators. In Appendix A, MassPartners suggests a procedure for working with Teachers in Need of Improvement as one way to address this issue.

Summary of Recommendations

THE redesign of teacher evaluation requires a commitment by state policy makers, institutions of higher education, and teacher unions, school committees, and administrators. A more detailed explanation of the recommendations for changes in state policy, in local school districts, and in institutions of higher education can be found on pages 20 - 23 of this paper.

Appendix B is a chart that lists practical descriptions and examples of professional standards for teachers. This is provided as an example so that leaders in school districts can begin to build a common language and understanding about what professional standards look like in classroom practice.

A. Recommendations for State Policy Changes

Recommended changes in current state law and regulations (603 CMR 35.00) that govern teacher evaluation include:

■ **Definition of Evaluation:** All forms of evaluation should focus on improving practice and therefore all forms have a formative component to them. Summative evaluation should be changed to observation-based evaluation.

By large majorities, principals (100%) and teachers (90%) believe that conferences are an important part of evaluation, yet they are an infrequent formality in traditional evaluation procedures. In addition, 65% of principals, but less than half of teachers (42%) believe that conferences are done well.

■ **Professional Standards for Teachers:**

Existing standards should be updated and aligned with standards-based education. Professional standards for teachers must be explained with sufficient descriptions and examples so that teachers and evaluators know what they mean.

■ **Principles of Evaluation:** New regulations should clarify the expectation that teachers and evaluators have ongoing dialogue about evaluation.

■ **Procedures for Evaluation:** Language should allow for differentiated evaluation procedures for teachers at differing points in their careers, rather than the current requirement of evaluating every teacher every two years.

■ **Gathering Information:** Current regulations grant permission for relying solely on direct observation for teacher evaluation. Multiple data sources should be the norm.

B. Recommendations to Local School Districts

■ **Review Operations and Contract Language:** Teacher unions, administrators and school committees should collaborate to develop the contractual changes required to achieve an evaluation system that responds to the differentiated needs of teachers.

■ **Build a Common Understanding about Professional Standards for Teachers:** Administrators and teachers must work together to build an understanding and common language about how professional standards are manifested in classroom practice. Multiple data sources that will be used in evaluation must be determined and, to avoid duplicating efforts, all goal-setting activities required of teachers should be aligned with each other.

■ **Provide Adequate Time:** Teacher unions, administrators, and school committees must realistically review the structure of school days and the time available for ongoing instructional dialogue between and among administrators and teachers.

■ **Consistent and Ongoing Training:** Principals must acquire practical knowledge in how to create and manage a professional community. Principals and superintendents should be held accountable for this during their own evaluations. Substantive professional development in teacher evaluation practices should be provided to both teachers and administrators.

C. Recommendations to Institutions of Higher Education

■ **Early and Ongoing Exposure to Real School and Classroom Life:** Students should experience day-to-day K-12 classrooms in their first year of college. Two-day practica might be replaced with full-quarter experiences, and an observation-based practicum should be available to first-year students.

K-12 schools and higher education institutions should consider creating a system in which graduates work as paid interns in schools. This provides classroom experience and a salary without requiring the graduate to become the teacher of record practicing alone immediately upon graduation.

■ **Strengthen Preparation in Standards-based Education:** Courses taught in institutions of higher education should model the standards-based environment in K-12 schools. This may require professional development for college and university faculty. Courses designed to teach pedagogy should teach the standards-based approach.

■ **Knowledge and Experience Exchange:** Instituting a system in which K-12 teachers and administrators become adjunct faculty in higher education institutions and college professors teach

in K-12 schools would help break down the separation that exists between preparing teachers and being a teacher.

The MassPartners Commitment

THE members of MassPartners recognize that implementing the proposals contained within this Position Paper means adding another task to an already full work agenda in public schools. The intent of this paper is to better align the task of evaluating teachers with the pressing focus on improving student achievement.

We hope that this paper initiates a public dialogue that will result in creating a teacher evaluation system that is valued by teachers and administrators as a personal growth opportunity and as an organizational improvement strategy for classrooms and schools.

The intent of this paper is to better align the task of evaluating teachers with the pressing focus on improving student achievement.

The Opportunities Hidden Within Teacher Evaluation Procedures

A. Teaching Matters

When students are pressed to name the one change that would be the most important in helping them learn more, “having more good teachers” tops the list (Public Agenda, 1997).

THE National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future issued its report entitled “What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future” in 1996 and highlighted teachers and the quality of teaching as the critical link in improving schools and increasing student achievement. Previous national reports and waves of education reform overlooked teachers and teacher quality as central to the plan for school improvement and student achievement. (*Journal of Staff Development*, Fall 2000, p .9)

Of all the factors that are important to student achievement in productive schools – and there are many – none is as important as what individual teachers know, believe about students, and can do. As a result of its two-year study, the National Commission challenged policymakers and the American public at large to “provide all students in the country with what should be their educational birthright: access to competent, caring, and qualified teachers.” (Summary Report, p.5)

Recent research studies of mathematics and science instruction conducted by Phi Delta Kappa, the National Science Foundation, and the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) conclude that student underperformance is more a function of the quality of instruction than of student ability. TIMSS focuses on international comparisons while the Phi Delta Kappa and National Science Foundation studies look exclusively at U. S. school districts. However, the findings of these three studies are remarkably similar to those of the National Commission on Teaching and

America’s Future. They indicate that range of instructional strategies, having confidence in the abilities of students, as well as teachers’ own beliefs about their efficacy as facilitators of student learning are central to teacher quality. To increase student achievement overall and to close the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students we must acknowledge the importance of teaching.

Of all the factors that are important to student achievement in productive schools - and there are many - none is as important as what individual teachers know, believe about students, and can do.

B. Systems that Influence Teacher Quality

THERE are numerous strategic components which interact to ensure teacher quality including teacher preparation, licensure, recruitment, re-certification, professional development and advancement and, of course, teacher evaluation. They all operate simultaneously within school systems and influence one another. This paper focuses specifically on teacher evaluation and its link to the improvement of student performance.

As leaders in schools throughout the Commonwealth, we are obligated to rethink current supervision and evaluation practices and align them with the transition to standards-based education that is sweeping the state and nation.

Notwithstanding the complex social, political, technological and moral challenges confronting instructional leaders ... the most critical issue before us remains finding ways to alter belief systems and to relieve the bureaucratic paralysis that encourages principals and other supervisors to rely on simplistic evaluative measures rather than engaging teachers meaningfully in instructional improvements. Seriously dialoguing with teachers ... and providing verifiable information about what is going on in their classroom is what "good" instructional supervision is all about (Glanz, 1997).

C. Effective Teacher Evaluation: Five Prerequisites

1. Time

TEACHER evaluation often remains a burdensome task teachers endure, a task conducted by already overly extended school administrators (CTASCD, 2000). Experienced Massachusetts educators estimate that one observation-based evaluation² can take up to four hours and that time accounts for only one classroom observation. Business literature indicates that evaluation requires 20 person hours per year per employee. Thinly stretched resources and competing priorities are impetus enough for rethinking teacher evaluation systems.

When coupled with contemporary research about supervision and evaluation, it becomes evi-

dent that there are more effective ways to influence a teacher's ability to improve practice. When teachers work together, instruction and student achievement is improved.

The American approach has been to write and distribute reform documents and ask teachers to implement the recommendations. To really improve teaching, we must invest far more than we do now in generating and sharing knowledge about teaching. In fact, almost all successful attempts to improve teaching have involved teachers working together to improve students' learning (Stigler and Hiebert, 1999).

When groups, rather than individuals, are seen as the main units for implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessment, they facilitate development of shared purpose for student learning and collective responsibility to achieve it (Newmann and Wehlage, 1995).

The higher standards for student achievement prescribed by the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks challenge educators to determine how best to deploy limited resources so students gain content knowledge and teachers have time to work together. Peer relationships are more important than ever before for our public school staff. This requires rethinking the structures and use of time and personnel. Creating a permanent substitute teacher pool, using teaching assistants, freeing teachers and administrators from duty periods, and restructuring high school schedules can begin to alter the use of time and offer opportunities for collaborative meetings and peer observation.

Teachers should be freed to work with supervisors, coach each other, and consult with master teachers— all focused on instruction and student achievement. Administrators need more time with fewer people. Ideally, one evaluator would be responsible for a maximum of twelve observation-based evaluations per year. A differentiated evalua-

² Observation-based evaluation is used throughout this paper to describe the traditional evaluation process, commonly known as summative evaluation, including the pre-observation conference, observation, documentation, and post-observation conference.

tion system³ will help accomplish this.

2. The Changing Supervisory Role

PRINCIPALS are the primary supervisor and evaluator in most school buildings. Redesigning this traditional role is paramount to the success of a contemporary system for evaluating teacher performance. Despite the fact that many approaches to supervision are collaborative in nature, the practice of supervision has often been one of inspection, oversight, and judgment (Blase and Blase, 1998).

Prominent theories hold that the principal's job should shift to that of being the Instructional Leader for the school. While this is a move in the right direction, research indicates that expecting the principal alone to adequately fill this role is untenable (MESPA, 1998 and MassPartners, 2000).

The principal's primary responsibility is to help large numbers of teachers do extraordinary things (Platt, et.al, 2000).

The principal's job is to create a professional community. Professional community has connotations relevant to many different fields, such as law, medicine, or journalism but as applied to schools — it is best described by three general features: teachers pursue a clear shared purpose for all students' learning; teachers engage in collaborative activities to achieve the purpose; and, teachers take collective responsibility for student learning (Newmann and Wehlage, 1995).

Instructional leadership is shared with teachers. In its best forms, it is being cast as coaching, reflection, collegial investigation, study teams, explorations into uncertain matters, and problem solving. Alternatives, not directives or criticism, are the focus, and administrators and teachers work together — in professional and moral (even noble) service to students (Blase and Blase, 1998).

Principals should be held accountable in their

³ One characteristic of a differentiated evaluation system is that observation-based evaluations are required every three or four years for experienced teachers with professional status.

In order for teacher evaluation to be a strong and supportive element of a broader system of teacher quality, common standards for teacher performance, universally understood and research based, must be at the foundation of all teacher quality initiatives.

own evaluations for leading professional communities and receive professional development in how to do so. A major part of the principal's role is creating, supervising, supporting, and participating in the structures in which teachers work collegially to evaluate and improve their practice. The principal is an active participant in and contributor to the professional community.

3. Common Language and Understanding about Professional Standards

IN order for teacher evaluation to be a strong and supportive element of a broader system of teacher quality, common standards for teacher performance, universally understood and research based, must be at the foundation of all teacher quality initiatives. That is, the professional standards we apply to the decisions about initial licensure should be the same as those we apply to teacher evaluation. The only difference is the level of expertise expected of teach-

ers who are novices as opposed to highly experienced teachers.

Appropriate distinctions between beginning and advanced practice are in the degree of sophistication teachers exhibit in the application of knowledge rather than in the kind of knowledge needed (CCSSO, 1992). The same standards of performance should be the foundation of teacher licensure, evaluation, re-certification, and professional development.

In addition, broad standards or core propositions such as those advanced by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards or the Council of Chief State School Officers must be expanded and described with sufficient examples from real classroom practice so that educators know what they mean. Appendix B of this paper defines suggested professional standards for teachers, including examples and descriptions that explain the standards in practical, observable terms. Thus supervisors and teachers, along with teacher preparation institutions and professional development organizations, can base their work on a common set of standards. Having a common language and concept system for talking about teaching is essential if professionals are going to communicate meaningfully about what is going on in classrooms (Saphier, 1993).

4. Using Data and Information

PROFESSIONAL literature about supervision and evaluation is rich in information about data sources used to assess teacher performance. Classroom observations and conferences are traditional and valuable sources of information. However, in institutional cultures that expect excellence, the use of multiple sources of data sends key messages about continuous growth and learning and about the value placed on demonstrated competence in all areas of performance (Platt, et.al. 2000).

Classroom observation [alone] leaves out direct evidence about teacher planning, teacher assessment and modification of instructional materials,

teacher's choice and adaptation of instructional methods and teacher's working relationship with colleagues, parents and members of the community (Millman and Darling-Hammond, 1990). Assessing and reflecting upon all aspects of a teacher's professional life as defined by Professional Standards for Teachers is required. In addition, the teacher's ability to reflect on student performance data and to validate or adjust instruction in order to help students achieve content standards should be assessed during observation-based evaluations.

In the transition to a more self-directed system of evaluation, it is necessary to expand the types of data about student performance that can inform the improvement of practice. Data that should be included in evaluation are standards-based assessments that measure student progress against state and local curriculum standards. Classroom assessments should also be an integral part of evaluation and include methods that measure incremental improvement for a given group of students.

Another powerful source of data that adds to the richness of teacher reflection and evaluation is structured surveys or interviews of students and parents. Parent and student perspectives should be one piece of data among many others. Depending upon the culture in the district, parent and student input as one component of the formal observation-based evaluation can be weighted. In this case, data from parents and students should be used carefully by focusing on group responses and patterns rather than individual responses (Platt, et.al., 2000).

Alternatively, parent and student input could be used outside of the formal observation-based evaluation to inform the teacher's self-reflection and professional development plan.

5. Conferences, Conversations, and Coaches

STANDARDS-BASED education requires rethinking traditional approaches to the work of teaching. In its simplest terms, standards-based education

reverses the traditional planning sequence common among the majority of educators and the one that was a basis of educator preparation programs. Today, before instructional strategies are selected, teachers need a clear vision of the standard being delivered and how student mastery of that standard will be measured. Students also must know what is expected of them and understand the rubrics that will assess their level of mastery.

This shift demands the strength of a professional community in which supervisors and teachers engage in conferences, conversations, and coaching that have a singular focus: improving student achievement by improving instruction.

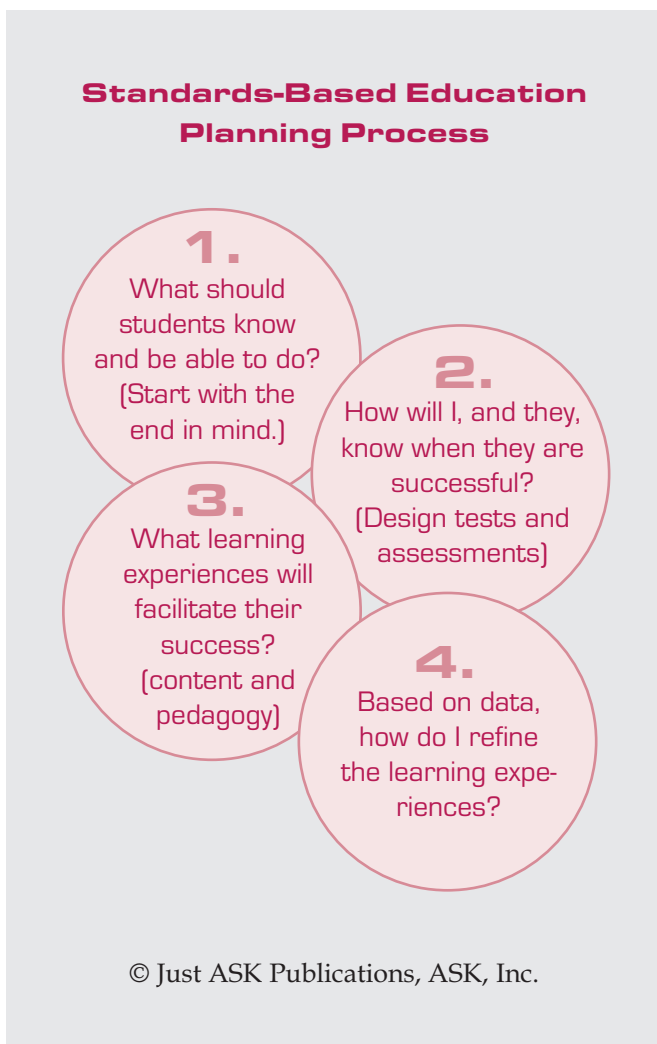
Ongoing conversations about teaching and learn-

ing are at the heart of a professional community. All formal and informal conversations between teachers and supervisors and among teachers themselves are based on the three R's of feedback: Reinforcement (validates strategies used by the teacher); Refinement (suggests changes to improve effectiveness); and Reflection (asks questions that stimulate the teacher's own thinking about modifying instruction and assessment) (Thompson, 2000).

Administrators and teachers overwhelmingly agree that, when done well, conferences help improve teaching and learning. There are, however, vastly differing reports about the quality and usefulness of conferences (MassPartners, 2000). Clearly, conversations about teaching and learning are valued, yet they are an infrequent formality in traditional evaluation processes.

[Good] supervision [and evaluation] engages both teachers and evaluators in the thinking and decision-making process (CASCD, 2000). Cognitive coaching, first advanced by Costa and Garmston (1994), is one framework that enables teachers to contemplate puzzling instructional problems with the help of a colleague. In an environment with thoughtful [reflection about] teaching, teachers will autonomously apply self-analysis, and voluntarily change their behaviors and strategies to improve their performance in the classroom (Pajak, 1993).

The principal's ability to foster reflection among teachers is paramount to creating a *professional community*. There is compelling evidence that principal behaviors have a dramatic effect on the reflective capacities of teachers. These behaviors include modeling good teaching so a teacher sees the principal [or master teacher] teach a complicated concept to students; classroom observation with or without feedback which encourages teachers to think about their practice; formal evaluative conferences; suggestions by principals especially when conveyed with a healthy respect for experimentation; and praise focused on specific and concrete teaching behaviors (Blase and Blase, 1998).



Capturing the Opportunities: A Differentiated Evaluation System

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, the need for schools to become centers of shared inquiry and decision-making was recognized.

Educators are moving toward a collective – not an individual – practice of teaching. Teachers are collaborating with each other and with supervisors in a ‘kind of mutual nudging in the profoundly cooperative search for answers’ to instructional problems (Dowling & Sheppard, 1976).

By using different evaluation procedures for teachers who are at differing stages in their careers, supervisors are freed to provide extra help to teachers in need, skilled teachers chart their own profes-

By using different evaluation procedures for teachers who are at differing stages in their careers, supervisors are freed to provide extra help to teachers in need, skilled teachers chart their own professional growth, and master teachers become resources for the whole school community.

sional growth, and master teachers become resources for the whole school community. Teacher reflection; opportunity for peer consultation, interaction and conversation; and analysis of data are key elements in this [evaluation] process (Lockwood, 2000).

While there are many configurations for differentiated evaluation, MassPartners suggests the formal organization of four paths: Beginning Teachers; Teachers New to the District; Experienced Teachers; and Teachers in Need of Improvement. The components of each path are summarized here as a template for refinement by local teacher unions, school committees and administrators. Decisions about which path a teacher is eligible for is based upon the informed judgment of the primary supervisor and documentation about past performance.

Beginning Teachers

- An induction program that includes mentoring during the first two years
- A peer coaching program during the first two years is also advisable
- Self-reflection using the Professional Standards for Teachers⁴
- Informal evaluator observations (e.g. walk-throughs, feedback, conversations)
- Two or more formal evaluator observations per year, with written feedback
- One formal observation-based evaluation per year

A beginning teacher is anyone who has been a teacher for less than three years. The focus of supervision and evaluation at this level is to foster the teacher’s sense of professional community and help develop and improve instructional strategies.

⁴ Suggested standards can be found in Appendix B.

A well-planned and reliable induction and mentoring system is critical to retain beginning teachers and to support their professional growth. These programs must be multi-year and flexible enough to respond to the teacher's changing needs.

Teachers New to the District

- An induction and peer coaching program of at least one year
- Development, implementation, and evaluation of a multiple-year professional development plan that includes examining student performance data
- Self-reflection using the Professional Standards for Teachers
- Informal evaluator observations (e.g. walk-throughs, feedback, conversations)
- Two formal evaluator observations per year, with written feedback
- One formal observation-based evaluation per year

These teachers are new to the district, but have had four or more previous years of teaching. At the conclusion of the first year in the district, the supervisor and the teacher can determine which path is most suitable for the subsequent year(s).

Experienced Teachers

- Self-reflection using the Professional Standards for Teachers
- Development, implementation and evaluation of a multiple-year professional development plan that includes examining student performance data
- Work with one or more other teachers as partners, critical friend, or mentor in implementing the professional development plan
- Informal evaluator observations (e.g. walk-throughs, feedback, conversations)
- A minimum of one annual progress meeting with evaluator

- A formal observation-based evaluation at the conclusion of a multiple year cycle

An experienced teacher is one who has been employed in the district for four or more years and whose performance has consistently met district expectations.

Teachers in Need of an Improvement Program

The performance of a teacher who has been determined by his/her supervisor to be unsatisfactory enters a remediation program intended to provide intensive assistance. This program offers a specific, clear, and time-bound plan of action for the teacher and a support team that is created to assist the teacher.

We have learned ... that healthy cultural conditions, energized growth-oriented workplaces for adults and the practices that support them, cannot flourish at their highest level unless procedures for at-risk teachers and dismissal actions are clearly delineated. These procedures must be reasonably developed, fairly applied, and focused on providing help to teachers in need. They must be seen by teachers as 1) maintaining worthwhile professional standards and 2) not threatening or even applicable to the vast majority of practitioners (Saphier, 1993).

A four-step process can be found in Appendix A that provides opportunities for improvement, review of progress, and a decision-making point about the teacher's status at its conclusion. It is intended to help school districts work with the small minority of teachers in trouble (estimated to be between 2% and 5% of the teaching force).

Research Findings

A. Overview

Teachers who deny their own need for remediation and professional development are often those who need it the most (Waintroob, 1995).
Outstanding teachers tend to be self-evaluating regardless of what system of evaluation is in place (Hoerr, 1998).

THE standards-based movement that is sweeping across the Commonwealth and throughout the nation is an opportunity for large-scale improvement in all systems of public school management. While the obstacles to achieving the ideal supervision and evaluation system are significant, they are surmountable if union leaders, administrators, school committees, and state policy makers commit to rethinking the connection

Standards may be the one thing to drive us out of our classrooms and into each other's arms (Thompson, 2000).

between the improvement of instruction and teacher evaluation processes. Schools are not getting the dividends in teacher professional growth for the amount of time now spent on evaluation.

MassPartners for Public Schools conducted research during the summer of 2000 to answer two questions: 1) Is teacher evaluation being carried out in a way that substantially supports the improvement of teaching and learning? and, 2) If teacher evaluation is not supporting the improvement of teaching and learning, what factors prevent it from doing so? The first phase of research consisted of a

review of literature found in professional journals over the last eight years. This was followed by a series of focus group meetings and a written survey conducted in three Massachusetts school districts.

B. Literature Search Findings

CURRENT state mandates require a formal, observation-based evaluation by a principal or other administrator of every teacher with professional status every two years and all others annually. While there is agreement that effective teacher evaluation is not only the duty, but also the ethical responsibility of administrators (Pratt, 1996), there are major obstacles to using teacher evaluation as an instructional improvement strategy as it currently exists.

Despite the fact that principals are expected to evaluate [teachers], only 6% strongly feel that they are able to direct the major focus of their time to improving student achievement, and 52% said that they are not able to spend time on this (MESPA, 1998). In a national study of over 300 superintendents, Paul Bredeson found that while superintendents ranked curriculum and instructional leadership as fourth in importance from a list of nine responsibilities, the same duty was ranked seventh by the amount of time they spent on it (1996).

Administrators often believe that they are unable to spend enough time in a teacher's classroom because of the daily press of running a school. They hesitate to be critical in the face of incomplete information (DeMitchell, 1995). Administrators also question their ability to assess the performance of practitioners who teach different subjects or grade levels than they themselves taught (DeMitchell, 1995; Fuhr, 1993).

Teacher roles and beliefs regarding their own evaluations also minimize the value of traditional evaluation procedures. And while administrators

believe that teachers have leadership capacity within the organizational structure of schools, teachers do not feel empowered to improve their practice within the context of formal evaluation structures (Shen, 1998).

These findings, coupled with the results from the

Administrators often believe that they are unable to spend enough time in a teacher's classroom because of the daily press of running a school. They hesitate to be critical in the face of incomplete information (DeMitchell, 1995). Administrators also question their ability to assess the performance of practitioners who teach different subjects or grade levels than they themselves taught (DeMitchell, 1995; Fuhr, 1993).

opinion survey commissioned by MassPartners advance the notion that the time is right for rethinking the alignment of teacher evaluation practices and standards-based school reform.

C. MassPartners Survey Findings

The school districts participating in the focus groups and survey portion of the research were limited in number and selected because they represented the diverse communities in the Commonwealth, including a large urban district, a wealthy suburban district, and a moderate-sized rural school district. A written survey was mailed to a random sample of 20% of the teachers and all of the principals in each, or 594 people⁵, during the summer of 2000. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the surveys were returned, which is a response rate far above traditional survey responses and an indication of the level of interest in this topic among our educators. The significant findings characterize the problems prevalent in current teacher evaluation systems and were consistent among teachers and administrators regardless of the type of district.

1. Common Understanding about Professional Standards

WIDELY differing opinions and the absence of significant majorities about the application of Professional Standards for Teachers in classrooms pinpoint a prevailing problem. Regardless of the type of teacher evaluation system within a district, meaningful conversations about what is going on in classrooms requires a mutual understanding about what professional standards look like in classroom practice. The discrepancies in educator views about this must be addressed.

⁵ While this is a relatively small sample, the opinions represented are considered credible because of the socio-economic diversity of communities surveyed and the consistency of responses among stakeholder groups and across districts.

■ Sixty-five percent (65%) of principals, 51% of teachers, and 45% of other evaluators⁶ believe that teachers and administrators share a common language and understanding about specific classroom behaviors that model professional standards for teachers. 27% of principals, 19% of teachers, and 35% of other evaluators were neutral. 30% of teachers disagree.

■ Fifty-eight percent (58%) of principals, 47% of teachers, and 40% of other evaluators believe that teachers and administrators share a common understanding of the definitions of specific criteria and expectations for performance ratings in summative teacher evaluation. 35% of teachers disagree.

■ Sixty-one percent (61%) of principals, 53% of teachers, and 55% of other evaluators believe that there is a shared understanding and common language about effective teaching. 20% of teachers and 30% of other evaluators disagree. 26% of teachers, 31% of principals, and 15% of other evaluators are neutral.

■ Sixty-five percent (65%) of principals and 72% of other evaluators do not believe that their own lack of understanding about classroom instruction and evaluation make them reluctant to dismiss an underperforming teacher with professional status. 46% of teachers disagree and 29% of teachers are neutral.

2. Time and Training

MORE than one-half of the teachers surveyed and one-third of the principals believe evaluators do not spend adequate time in classrooms. The interest, however, in improving evaluation is evident. By overwhelming majorities, both teachers and administrators agree that if evaluation is to

⁶ Survey respondents were asked to identify themselves as “teacher,” “principal,” or “other evaluator.” It is assumed that “other evaluators” are teachers with supervisory responsibilities.

improve teaching and learning, professional development is required.

■ Sixty-one percent (61%) of principals, 36% of teachers, and 30% of other evaluators agree that administrators spend sufficient time in classrooms carrying out district expectations for evaluation. 49% of teachers and 45% of other evaluators disagree.

■ Sixty-one percent (61%) of principals believe that regular discussion occurs about what professional standards for teachers look like in classroom practice. Only 36% of teachers and 30% of other evaluators agree that regular discussion occurs.

■ Ninety-six percent (96%) of principals, 80% of teachers, and 95% of other evaluators believe that ongoing professional development about teacher evaluation is needed if evaluation is to improve teaching and learning.

■ All principals (100%), 70% of teachers, and 68% of other evaluators believe that the goal setting process required of teachers at the beginning of each year should be linked to teacher evaluation.

■ Twenty-seven percent (27%) of principals, 58% of teachers, and 45% of other evaluators agree that peer observation is a more effective tool for improving teaching than formal observation. 54% of principals, 30% of teachers, and 25% of other evaluators were neutral.

3. Contractual Obligations

BY significant majorities, principals surveyed believe that teacher contracts are an obstacle to dismissing ineffective teachers. Yet, as we have seen, when more flexible language is negotiated, administrators do not take advantage of it (Ballou, 2000). Neither teacher organizations nor administrators seek to maintain underperforming teachers

in classrooms. Principals should be aware of contract provisions that define required documentation and be prepared to substantiate teacher performance concerns. A differentiated evaluation system such as the Pathways program described in this paper could resolve this issue.

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of principals, 29% of teachers, and 42% of other evaluators believe that teacher contracts contain provisions that inhibit their ability to dismiss underperforming teachers. 20% of principals, 45% of teachers, and 37% of other evaluators disagree.

- Ninety-two percent (92%) of principals, 61% of teachers, and 80% of other evaluators believe that, even given high turnover rates among staff without professional status, administrators hold teachers without professional status to high standards for evaluation.

4. Conferencing

BY large majorities, both teachers and administrators value conferences within the current practice of teacher evaluation. A transition to a system that elevates conferences to frequent and focused conversations about professional practice and student achievement responds to this sense of value.

- All principals (100%), 90% of teachers, and 90% of other evaluators believe that conferences are an important component of teacher evaluation.

- Sixty-five percent (65%) of principals, 42% of teachers, and 40% of other evaluators agree that conferences between teachers and administrators as part of evaluation are done well. 12% of principals, 34% of teachers, and 25% of other evaluators disagree. 23% of principals, 24% of teachers, and 35% of other evaluators were neutral.

- All principals (100%), 84% of teachers, and 100% of other evaluators believe that, when done well, conferences help improve teaching and learning.

Conclusion

AN evaluation system that strengthens the culture of schools (Saphier, 1993) would have a commitment from the top of the district, with agreements about its procedures and resource allocation among the school committee, superintendent, and teachers union; the superintendent and principals; and the principals and building representatives. These leaders will be trendsetters and evaluation will be in a new context that reinforces the belief that evaluation is useful and help from colleagues and superiors is welcome. It would be an evaluation system that strengthens the professional community.

Educators are becoming more skilled at collecting data about student performance. The next step is to align teacher evaluation with the shift to standards-based education. And the future is here. Educators are accountable for student achievement. Yet, evaluation is usually perceived as a means to control teachers, to motivate them, to hold them accountable for their services, or to get rid of them, rather than as a means of improving their performance (Nevo, 1994).

The redesign of evaluation systems requires remembering that 85% of all teachers are competent and effective, 2-5% of teachers are underperforming, and 10% are at the top of their game. Performance appraisal that respects the competence of the vast majority of our teacher workforce, supports their own initiative to improve student achievement, and helps them work together to improve classroom practice is the right strategy for improving teacher and student performance.

Policy and Implementation Recommendations: Achieving Contemporary Teacher Evaluations in a Standards-Based Environment

If collaborative endeavor is necessary to school adequacy, the schools must provide it. The responsibility rests with schools, not individual teachers. Further, administrators, policymakers, and the public alike must accept a new conception of school time (Raywid, 1993).

Overview of Recommendations

TEACHER evaluation is one system operating in all schools that can and should influence the improvement of teaching. Teachers and administrators agree that teacher evaluation should aid in the improvement of teaching and learning but hold widely differing opinions about how effectively it influences classroom practice (MassPartners, 2000). This dichotomy affirms the vast potential available for bolstering teacher evaluation as a strategy for improving teaching and learning.

State regulatory changes and changes to policies and structures at the local level are required to develop updated teacher evaluation procedures. Specific state policy and regulatory changes are recommended in this section. Recommendations for local school districts are also specified and require the mutual commitment of school committees, administrators, and teacher organizations. Actions that institutions of higher education would take are suggested and we have stated the commitment of MassPartners member organizations to support implementation of the concepts in this paper.

A. Recommendations for State Policy Changes

Changes within the current state law and regulations (603 CMR 35.00) governing the evaluation of teachers include:

1. Definition of Evaluation

The premise upon which evaluation is defined under current regulation separates the process of improving practice from that used to assess job performance and must be changed. All forms of evaluation should focus on improving practice and therefore all forms have a formative component to them. The summative evaluation referenced in current regulation should be changed to observation-based evaluations to better define the function of this type of evaluation.

2. Professional Standards for Teachers

The Principles of Effective Teaching should be updated to reflect and align with the movement to standards-based education. Further, these standards must be described in sufficient detail with descriptions and examples so that teachers and evaluators understand and can assess how each standard manifests itself in classroom practice and in the whole professional life of a teacher.

In addition, the same standards of performance should be the foundation of teacher licensure, evaluation, professional development, and re-certification. Appropriate distinctions between beginning and advanced practice are in the degree of sophistication teachers exhibit in the application of knowledge rather than in the kind of knowledge needed.

3. Principles of Evaluation

Revisions to this section would clarify the expectation that teachers and evaluators have ongoing dialogue about evaluation and that multiple sources of data are the norm for both the person being evaluated and the evaluator, rather than the isolated activities implied by the existing language.

4. Procedures for Evaluation

The requirement that teachers with professional status be evaluated at least once every two years should be changed. New language should grant greater flexibility for evaluating experienced, competent teachers less frequently using observation-based evaluations when substantive collegial professional development structures are in place. Provisions should also be made to differentiate procedures for teachers in need of improvement. It is appropriate to evaluate teachers without professional status or teachers new to the district on an annual basis.

5. Gathering Information

Current regulation grants permission for relying solely on direct observation for teacher evaluation rather than the multitude of data sources that can add richness and depth. Multiple data sources should be the norm.

6. Administrator Evaluation

This paper focuses on teacher evaluation. Regulations governing the evaluation of administrators should be updated and revised.

B. Recommendations to Local School Districts

IF flexibility is provided within state policy, school districts can transition teacher evaluation to a more contemporary system that better matches the district resources with needs of its teachers and administrators. A two-year planning and transition period can be expected.

1. Review Operations and Contract Language

TEACHER organizations, administrators and school committees should design procedures, provide the resources, and negotiate the contractual changes required to achieve an evaluation system that respects and responds to the differentiated needs of the teaching workforce and individual teachers. This changes the process of evaluation from the evaluator being the sole judge of good teaching to a mutual responsibility among teachers and administrators.

There must be a mutually agreed upon understanding of the process used for seeking the improvement or dismissal of teachers among all parties involved.

2. Build a Common Understanding about Professional Standards for Teachers

THROUGH ongoing school and district conversations, all teachers and administrators must be familiar with standards against which teacher performance will be evaluated. Administrators and teachers must work collegially to define and use a common language and shared understanding of effective teaching that enables both evaluators and teachers to articulate what professional standards mean in classroom practice.

Teachers and administrators must define the criteria and definitions for performance evaluation.

The common vocabulary developed through a set of professional standards must be the frame of reference during all evaluation activities. The multiple data sources that will be used to evaluate performance against the professional standards must be determined.

To avoid duplication, the goal-setting activities required of teachers should be aligned including individual goals and school or district improvement goals. As an indicator of the importance of teacher goals in improving teaching and learning, principals will return to the goals as part of their conversations with individual teachers throughout the year.

3. Provide Adequate Time

IT is the mutual responsibility of the district and the principal to find the time for principals to focus on supervision and instruction by removing administrative duties that can be delegated to another person, even if it requires money.

Teacher organizations, administrators, and school committees must work collegially to realistically review the structure of school days and the time available for ongoing instructional dialogue between and among administrators and teachers.

4. Consistent and Ongoing Administrator Training

SCHOOL districts must help principals acquire practical knowledge in how to create and manage a professional community. Principals and superintendents should be held accountable during their own evaluations for creating a professional community.

Substantive professional development in teacher evaluation practices and procedures is required. This training should be provided to both teachers and administrators. It would build a knowledge base about effective evaluation and skills in its techniques and procedures.

C. Recommendations to Institutions of Higher Education

1. Early and Ongoing Exposure to Real School and Classroom Life

EARLY in their college experience, students should experience the day-to-day operation of K-12 classrooms. While it is fair to say that most college students just left high school and thus already have personal knowledge, these experiences would be from a teacher's viewpoint, not from that of a student.

These experiences should give students an understanding of the scope and sequence of lesson planning and the analysis and follow-up required to assess the results of a teaching strategy. If students can see firsthand the progression of learning, their coursework will be more meaningful.

Consideration should be given to replacing two-day practicums with full quarter experiences and an observation-based practicum should be available to first-year students.

It is the mutual responsibility of the district and the principal to find the time for principals to focus on supervision and instruction by removing administrative duties that can be delegated to another person, even if it requires money.

Higher education institutions and K-12 schools should consider creating a system in which college graduates work as paid interns in schools. This provides real classroom experience and a salary without requiring the graduate to become the teacher of record practicing alone immediately upon graduation.

2. Strengthen Preparation in Standards-based Education

To prepare a teacher workforce for entering a standards-based environment requires adjusting the coursework in higher education institutions. Within Massachusetts, some institutions are making this shift but more needs to be done. We recognize that colleges are not preparing students for work solely in Massachusetts' schools; however, the standards-based movement is lasting and nationwide.

Institutions of higher education should provide professional development to their faculty to enable them to offer standards-based courses and thus model the classroom environment in which K-12 teachers are practicing. In addition, courses specifically designed to teach pedagogy should be aligned with and focus on the standards-based approach.

3. Knowledge and Experience Exchange

BEGINNING teachers experience difficulty in managing classrooms, in successfully delivering lessons, and in becoming part of school cultures. To help beginning teachers be more at ease, these requirements cannot be foreign in the first weeks and year on the job. This is a shared responsibility of K-12 schools and higher education institutions.

Instituting a system in which K-12 teachers and administrators become adjunct faculty in higher education institutions and college professors teach in K-12 schools would help break down the separation that exists between preparing teachers and being a teacher.

The MassPartners Commitment

THE members of MassPartners recognize that implementing the proposals contained within this Position Paper means adding another task to an already full work agenda in public schools. The intent of this proposal is to better align the task of evaluating teachers with the pressing focus on improving student achievement. We attempted to share the leading thinking about evaluation from across the nation and the opinions of Massachusetts' educators in order to inform the practice of teacher evaluation here in the Commonwealth.

MassPartners for Public Schools will promote the adoption of this concept at the state level and work to ensure that technical support is available to help schools with its implementation including aligning the consultative and professional development services provided by MassPartners member organizations.

With so much political and public attention being paid to the quality of our teaching workforce as an influence on student achievement, MassPartners chose to focus this Position Paper on Teacher Evaluation. The policies, regulations and procedures governing the evaluation of administrators must be reviewed and revised, as well.

We hope that this paper initiates a public dialogue that will result in creating a teacher evaluation system that is valued by teachers and administrators as a personal growth opportunity and as an organizational improvement strategy for classrooms and schools.

Appendix A: Evaluation Procedures for Teachers in Need of Improvement

1.

Step 1. Identification and notification to teacher who is not meeting expectations.

Primary evaluator submits documentation to a Peer Assistance and Review Committee.



Committee evaluates documentation and agrees that documentation warrants placing teacher in this evaluative path or refers documentation back to primary evaluator for lack of evidence.



Teacher reenters Observation-based evaluation but with increased frequency.

Teacher enters Step 2.

Operational Considerations:

a) What is the make-up of committee?

One suggestion:

A master teacher, union leader, and central office or other administrator.

a) What evidence will the committee accept?

Models of the expected documentation should be developed prior to implementing the system.

b) How frequent will observation-based evaluations be for this teacher?

2.

Step 2. Written plan for improvement and the provision of intensive assistance.

Consulting Team is designated.



Improvement Plan is written.

Operational Considerations:

a) What is the make-up of Consulting Team?

One suggestion:

Peers who are trained in helping other teachers such as master teachers, mentors, consulting teachers, or professional developers.

a) Who writes the plan?

One suggestion:

Consulting Team members.

b) What does it contain?

One suggestion: The plan should contain measurable outcomes that will be accepted as evidence of improvement, a timeline, the steps the teacher and Consulting Team will take, a record-keeping system, and signatures of participants.

Note: This process is intended to help school districts work with a teacher whose performance does not meet district expectations. This four-step process provides opportunities for improvement, reviews of progress, and a decision-making point about the teacher’s status at its conclusion. It is intended to help school districts work with the minority (estimated to be less than 5%) of teachers who are considered underperforming.

3.

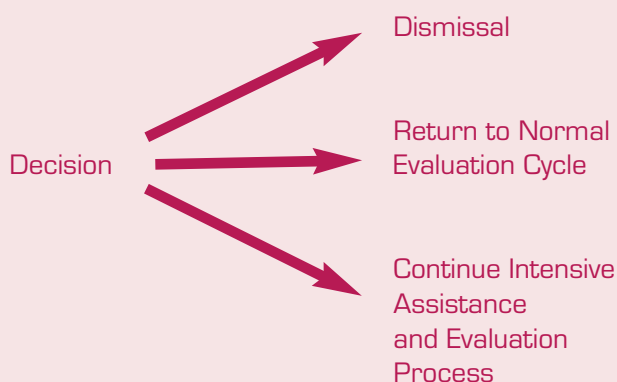
Step 3. Gathering and compiling evaluation data during this period.

Evaluators gather and compile data as defined in the Teachers Improvement Plan.



4.

Step 4. Decision on Teacher’s Status.



Operational Considerations:

a) Who will gather and compile data?

One suggestion: Primary evaluator and members of the original Peer Assistance and Review Committee.

b) What is the format for record keeping?

One suggestion: Agreements should be reached about a format for a logbook showing assistance provided by members of the Consulting Team and the action taken by the teacher in question.

Operational Considerations:

a) What timeline will be provided for improving performance?

One suggestion: Three months to six months.

b) Who will make the decision required in this step?

One suggestion: The principal, in consultation with the superintendent and a member of the team designated to gather and compile data that was organized in Step 3.

Appendix B: Professional Standards for Teachers — Examples in Classroom Practice

A. Plans Curriculum and Instruction

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>1. Draws on content of the relevant curriculum frameworks to plan activities addressing standards that will advance students' level of content knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knows content of relevant Curriculum Frameworks. ■ Relates classroom activities to specific Framework provisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lesson plans identify standards to be learned based on Frameworks.
<p>2. Plans sequential units of study that make learning cumulative, connect learning across disciplines, and are based on the learning standards within the Frameworks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plans a hierarchy of lessons and units that demonstrate the sequence and relativity of all activities and their relationship to the appropriate Framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher can produce written evidence of planning that shows sequence and a progressive building toward learning objectives within the Frameworks. ■ Students can articulate the relationship between current and previous learning activities and the overall goals of the unit.
<p>3. Draws on results of formal and informal assessments and knowledge of human development to plan learning activities appropriate for the range of students within a classroom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifies prerequisite skills, concepts and vocabulary that students need to know in order to be successful. ■ Understands the use of assessment in the planning of future and remedial work. ■ Demonstrates formal knowledge of the stages and indicators of human development. ■ Understands the relationship between human development and the ability of students to learn and retain material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pre and post assessment tools show relevance to the subject matter and to the range of students within the classroom. ■ Several different types of assessments are included in lesson plans. ■ Lessons demonstrate alternative approaches for diverse learners. ■ Teacher can express theory of human development and its application in lesson delivery.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>4. Plans lessons with clear objectives and measurable outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Formulates objectives based on previous student outcomes. ■ Formulates and refines a clear learning objective or objectives for each lesson. Selects learning activities appropriate to the age, level, and performance of students. Relates conclusion of the lesson to the objectives of the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lesson plans identify objectives and expected outcomes. ■ Plans include varied instructional strategies to achieve the objectives and outcomes. Students can identify the objectives and expected outcomes of the lesson.
<p>5. Plans the pedagogy appropriate to the specific discipline and to the age and cognitive level of the students in the classroom.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands the capabilities of students in classroom. ■ Is aware of varied teaching techniques such as direct instruction, practice, discussion, problem-solving, Socratic dialogue, homework, and research projects and the appropriate use of each. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Articulates relationship between the age and cognitive level of students and the planned pedagogical approach. ■ Plans show multiple pedagogical approaches to achieve desired objective.
<p>6. Seeks resources from colleagues, families, and the community to enhance learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uses community resources to supplement and enhance learning activities. ■ Consults with colleagues, formally and informally, to increase learning opportunities. ■ Uses families as resources to support classroom instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students have opportunities to interact with a variety of people from the community. ■ Plans and lesson delivery demonstrate the relationship between the use of the community resource and the lesson objectives. ■ Administration is aware of occasions when community and staff resources are being used. ■ District-wide information, which is provided to teachers on sources of outside expertise, is used.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>7. Integrates technology and media in the management of the work of teaching and in student learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is aware of and competent in all available technology. ■ Understands the use of technology as a teaching and learning tool to increase the quality of instruction. ■ Understands the use of technology in planning, communicating, and record keeping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plans show opportunities for students to use multi-media platforms within learning activities. ■ Teacher uses available technology.
<p>8. Uses information in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to plan strategies for integrating students with special needs into regular classrooms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands components of IEPs and plans teaching and learning strategies for students with special needs that are compatible with regular classroom operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students with special needs are integrated into regular classroom routines and lessons without diverting attention from tasks at hand. ■ Teacher collaborates with school-based specialists, resource personnel, and administrators to meet the special learning needs of all students.

B. Delivers Effective Instruction

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>1. Sets high standards and expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is aware of school and district expectations. ■ Identifies specific and challenging performance expectations for student learning. ■ Judges student work against the standards and expectations. ■ Informs parents about the standards and expectations and enlists their help in achieving them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teachers, students, and parents can articulate performance standards and expectations. ■ Feedback to students is related to the standards. ■ Standards and high expectations are overtly explained in class work and in student and parent communication.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>2. Clarifies learning objectives and gives students models of quality work to illustrate expectations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ States or otherwise communicates the objectives of the lesson to students, preferably at the outset of the lesson. ■ Explains relevance of new unit and connects it with previous work and future units. ■ Provides exemplars of student work to show quality and level of performance expected. ■ Believes that students can achieve high standards and builds that belief within students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students understand the objective of each lesson. ■ A well thought-out introductory lesson is used to start a new unit. ■ Students understand and can defend their grade(s) by referencing known performance expectations.
<p>3. Provides regular and frequent feedback to students on their progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adheres to school policy on student conferences, grading, and return of student work, including homework. ■ Is available to students after school and during unassigned times. ■ At the elementary level, informs parents about progress and performance. ■ At the middle and high school level, maintains a system where students are aware of their grade(s) between formal reporting periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Records of student conferences and meetings with parents are available for review. ■ Students receive frequent assessment and specific feedback, both verbally and in writing, on individual pieces of work that allows students to correct and improve performance. ■ Appropriate examples of feedback are available for students and parents to review. ■ Trends in a student's performance are noted early and parents and the student are informed in a timely manner. ■ Students can explain their performance level between formal reporting periods. ■ Provides reteaching opportunities for students who require it.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>4. Models clear writing and speaking in communication with students and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uses correct language at all times in speaking to or with students. ■ Writes in a legible and grammatically correct manner. ■ Selects language that communicates effectively and respectfully with parents and students. ■ Demands and expects clear and civil communication from all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information written by teacher in class is grammatically correct, well planned, and age appropriate. ■ Students' oral and written communication errors are corrected in a supportive and calm manner.
<p>5. Employs multiple teaching and learning strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Employs a variety of teaching techniques such as direct instruction, practice, discussion, problem-solving, Socratic dialogue, homework, and research projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Evidence of multiple strategies can be seen in plan book, classroom observation, and grading system.
<p>6. Uses a variety of teaching techniques and provides many and varied opportunities for diverse learners to achieve competence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates the training, talent, willingness, and intent to utilize numerous instructional strategies. ■ Knows which techniques are likely to be most effective for a given lesson objective and group of students. ■ Uses homework to reinforce lesson objectives and checks it for understanding. ■ Is skilled in using questioning to stimulate thinking and does not abandon a student who offers an incorrect answer. Knows how to prompt correct answers and encourages student to respond. ■ Regularly checks for understanding. Regularly summarizes key concepts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Notes in plan book about the use of and the success or failure of strategy demonstrate teacher reflection on strategy. ■ Information gathered from checking for understanding and from formal and informal assessments is used to modify instruction or reteach objective. ■ Students feel supported in responding to questions. ■ Teacher demonstrates flexibility in switching to another instructional strategy if the one planned is not succeeding. ■ Evidence is available to show that teacher varied strategies for type(s) of learners within classroom. Students actively summarize their learning through a variety of strategies.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>7. Integrates reading and writing across disciplines to meet the learning objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teaches and reinforces reading and writing strategies as appropriate for the discipline within the context of assignments. ■ Uses reading and writing assignments to further the learning objectives. ■ Seeks opportunities to collaborate with grade level colleagues to develop, assign, and assess reading and writing assignments that promote interdisciplinary learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students are using reading and writing strategies and assignments to further their learning. ■ Reading and writing assignments are linked to learning objectives. ■ Students can explain the purpose of reading and writing assignments and their application across content areas.
<p>8. Builds on students' prior knowledge and experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Incorporates previous learning into new units of study. ■ Selects appropriate review work in preparation for introduction of new concepts and units. ■ Shows connection between current topics and previous learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Builds cumulative review into assessment of current work. ■ Students' grasp of previous knowledge is reinforced by formal and informal assessments. ■ Students can reference previous work and its application in current lesson or unit.
<p>9. Designs, analyzes, and uses assessment data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates an awareness and use of multiple forms of assessments both formal and informal and formative and summative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plan book and student records exhibit the use of multiple forms of assessment.
<p>10. Uses a variety of formal and informal assessments to accurately measure student progress toward, and achievement of, the learning objectives, and to plan or modify further instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Confers with previous teacher and previous grade level performance indicators. ■ Regularly uses a variety of informal and formal assessments of student progress for instructional revisions and decision-making. ■ Develops and uses authentic assessment which describes a student's learning process as well as his/her learning achievements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Records and information that may be helpful to a receiving teacher are shared. ■ Use of a variety of assessment opportunities can be found in plan books and student records. ■ Analyses of student work and new or modified lessons for individuals or for the group based on that analyses are evident.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>1.1. Translates evaluation of student work into records that accurately convey the level of student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintains accurate record keeping in accordance with school district policies and grade level and school expectations. ■ Reports progress of student against the standards, not only to previous work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can explain results from tests and other assessment instruments in language understandable to students and parents. ■ Reports cards are complete and accurately reflect student progress toward or mastery of the learning standards.

C. Manages Classroom Climate and Operations

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>1. Creates an environment that is conducive to learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promotes confidence and perseverance in all students. ■ Maximizes and recognizes progress made through effort. ■ Understands that getting a student to internalize confidence and a belief in hard work can be a long, gradual process. ■ Communicates the components of effective effort to students and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students' attempts to solve problems and exert effort are constantly reinforced. ■ Positive expectations of overall class competence are used to motivate individuals within the group. ■ Teachers use perseverance and positive attributions when students make errors. ■ Students can express their teacher's belief in them. ■ Various assessment instruments are used at the right time to reinforce the student's belief in his/her own capacity to learn.
<p>2. Creates a physical environment appropriate to a range of learning activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is able to create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning through the use of décor, student participation, and purposeful use of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The classroom is an inviting, stimulating place to the eye.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>3. Maintains appropriate standards of behavior, mutual respect, and safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands, supports, and adheres to the disciplinary policies and procedures in the district. ■ Sets expectations and conveys those expectations to students. ■ Takes action in disciplinary situations appropriate to the behavior and age level. ■ Seeks advice and assistance from support personnel as needed and keeps them informed about potential problem areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students understand classroom and school expectations. ■ All safety procedures are implemented in the classroom or activity setting. ■ Individual problems are dealt with as they arise, with minimum disruption of other students.
<p>4. Manages classroom routines and procedures without loss of significant instructional time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands the importance of an orderly classroom in furthering the learning. ■ Carries out routine tasks without disruption. ■ Uses grade level and age-appropriate assignments to get routine tasks completed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Daily routines are well organized and carried out by students and teacher without the need for detailed instruction. ■ Duties and privileges are rotated among students on a scheduled basis. ■ There is a quick and well-planned beginning to student participation in the class. ■ Teacher can respond to distractions and individual student needs while preserving the focus and flow of the class.
<p>5. Promotes climate of community, inclusion, and mutual support among students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands how to build alliances and support mechanisms among students. ■ Understands how to give students ownership of classroom goals and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students ask for and get help from one another. ■ Students develop instructional materials such as questions, projects, and assessments. ■ Students participate in a discussion without fear of mistake; errors are honored. ■ Students take intellectual risk.

D. Promotes Equity and an Appreciation of Diversity

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>1. Acts on the belief that all students can master a challenging curriculum and includes all students in the range of academic opportunities and in higher order thinking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates belief that students can achieve high standards and expresses this belief to students. ■ Modifies instruction to meet the diverse needs of students within the classroom. ■ Tries a variety of strategies to engage diverse learners in order to stimulate their interest in the lesson. ■ Continually assesses success of instructional strategy and changes approach if warranted. ■ Identifies students who are not meeting expectations and develops a plan that designates student and teacher responsibilities. ■ Provides opportunities for extra help, as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instruction is modified or lesson re-taught based upon outcomes of formal and informal assessments. ■ Modifications to instruction are noted in plan book. ■ Students are confident in taking risks with new material and feel supported in trying challenging academic work. ■ Accurate records of student performance, consultation with resource personnel, and special service needs are maintained.
<p>2. Assesses the significance of student differences in performance levels, learning styles, cultural heritage, language, socio-economic backgrounds, and physical and emotional disabilities and adapts classroom activities appropriately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the differences in students. ■ Knows background and culture of students in the classroom and community. ■ Varies instruction to accommodate learning styles and needs. ■ Seeks out and collaborates with colleagues and/or support personnel to meet the special learning needs of all students. ■ Identifies need for remedial or special services and advocates for services to be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Curriculum materials and classroom artifacts reflect the students' background and culture. ■ Accurate records of student performance, consultation with resource personnel, and special service needs are maintained. ■ Cultural or language barriers are taken into consideration and accommodations made when working with families.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>3. Helps all students understand essential political principles of the United States, its underlying ideals and government institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Understands the theory of American government and its political institutions and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teacher and students model respect for democratic ideals in the operation of classroom life. ■ Students understand basic American ideals of freedom, individual rights, and government by the people.

E. Meets Professional Responsibilities

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>1. Understands his or her legal responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Abides by district policies and applicable laws governing teacher conduct and school operation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participates in training programs offered by district. ■ Consults with and informs appropriate personnel when legal question arises.
<p>2. Conveys knowledge of and enthusiasm for his/her academic discipline to students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is well versed in the background, history, and application of the subject being taught. ■ Conveys anecdotes about the subject to stimulate student interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enthusiasm for content area is evident. ■ Students can express the value and application of the lesson within the content area.
<p>3. Maintains interest in current research and development in the academic discipline and applies knowledge in classroom practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reads timely material about the academic discipline through publications such as professional journals, professional association newsletters, and research papers or articles. ■ Maintains familiarity with the range of pedagogical research. ■ Shares information about research and development in the field with students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adjusts instruction, as warranted, based upon research and development. ■ Students express knowledge of recent developments within content area.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>4. Participates in building a professional community by collaborating with colleagues to continuously improve instruction, assessment, and student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participates in grade level, content area and school-based or district-wide planning meetings. ■ Assists in evaluating and redesigning curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Productive contributions to an atmosphere of collaboration, rather than blame, on behalf of student achievement is evident in meetings. ■ Supportable facts, rather than hearsay or innuendo, are the discussion points in conversations. ■ Engages in peer observation and feedback. ■ Offers and asks for assistance from colleagues.
<p>5. Works actively to involve parents in their child’s academic performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informs parents about grade level or content area expectations for semester/year. ■ Provides opportunities for parents to interact with student and teacher about the student’s performance. ■ Seeks information from parents about the student that can influence performance and shares information about student progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents can express understanding about their child’s academic work. ■ Parents feel welcomed in school. Parents and teachers work together on behalf of the child.
<p>6. Reflects critically upon his/her teaching and identifies areas for further professional development as part of a professional development plan that is linked to grade level, school, and district goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Selects valuable and applicable training in his/her field and incorporates training into classroom practice. ■ Understands grade level, school and district goals and plans his/her professional development in accordance with those goals. ■ Can self-identify areas for improvement and reflects upon suggestions from evaluators in developing personal growth plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Classroom practices are adjusted based upon advanced training. ■ Continued professional development is consistent with short- and long-term goals of the teacher and school.

Standard	Descriptor/Indicator	Examples of Evidence
<p>7. Understands legal and ethical issues as they apply to responsible and acceptable use of the Internet and other resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teachers own use of the Internet reflects good legal and ethical judgment. ■ Lesson plans and instructional strategies demonstrate appropriate use of the Internet by students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Directs and monitors student use of resources while in school. ■ Maintains Internet access safeguards appropriate to age level and provided by district.

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